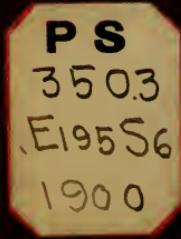




# SOME ROUSTIC RHYMES



Will Templer



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# SOME RUSTIC RHYMES

BY

WILL TEMPLER

*Becker.*

Let us go back to the shady woods,  
To the meadows and fields of clover ;  
Let us return to our childhood's days,  
And in fancy live them over.



NEW YORK  
THE BURR PRINTING HOUSE

1900



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Nov. 21:99.

To My Friend  
JAMES E. TOWER,

TO WHOSE KINDLY INTEREST I OWE EVERYTHING,  
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.



## PREFACE.

---

PROMPTED by the solicitations of friends, I have collected from the various publications in which they have appeared these simple rustic rhymes, and now offer them for the first time in the form of a little book. In them I have endeavored to portray country life as it is; its joys and its sorrows, its humor and its pathos, its hopes for the future and its traditions of the past, not as seen from a distance, but from the vantage ground of a life spent among rural people.

How well I have succeeded I leave to the opinion of those who may read, whether they are to-day active in country life, or whether it comes back to them laden with the memories of a happy past.

WILL TEMPLER.



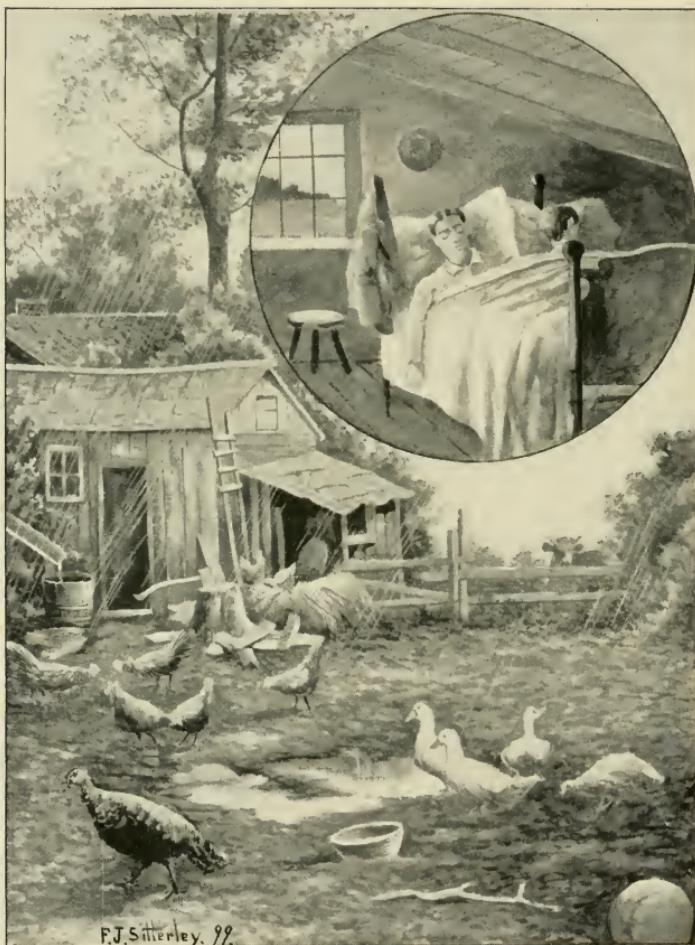
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F.J. Sitterley. 99.

## SOME RUSTIC RHYMES

---

### THE RAIN UPON THE ROOF.

JUST daylight, and the sombre dawn is creeping  
through the blind,  
Our waking eyes, in darkened nooks, strange shapes  
and shadows find;  
There's music in the atmosphere, beaten on roof and  
pane,  
The dreamy, restful music of the softly falling rain.

What is there in this lullaby of softly falling rain,  
That takes us back to other days, to live them o'er  
again?  
We drift, in drowsy, sweet content, back to the days  
of old;  
We dream, although we're not asleep, while memo-  
ries unfold.

We're boys again, and it is June, a June of long  
ago;  
We sleep up in the woodshed loft, our summer  
ranch, you know.  
The music that we listen for's the steady patt'ring  
show'r,  
And when there's such a morn as this, we doze an-  
other hour.

Splash, splash, there at the gutter the barrel is running o'er;  
Drip, drip, the roof has sprung a leak; I hear it on the floor;  
The brook down by the spring house has burst its banks, I think;  
Now that will roil the water, and it won't be fit to drink.

Tink, tink, the cows are coming, slowly coming up the lane,  
We hear the brazen cow bell where they're waiting in the rain;  
It's milking time. Well, if it is, the cows can surely wait  
An hour or so, this rainy morn, and then it won't be late.

That thumping in the stable, that tramping to and fro,  
Is old Jerry getting hungry, he always acts just so.  
He won't have much to do to-day; let him exercise his hoof  
While we will dream and listen to the rain upon the roof.

The pigs are squealing in the pen, we hear the roosters crow,  
From the pasture on the side hill come bleatings soft and low;

Those robins in the apple-tree are making quite a row;

Old Ben is barking at the gate; what is the matter now?

'Tis strange that when we get a chance to snatch a little sleep,

The turkeys all must gobble, ducks quack and chickens peep.

There's a clatter in the kitchen round the cook stove.  
Mother's there.

It won't be very long before we hear her on the stair.

"The chores are all to do; dear boys, get up," she'll softly say.

"You soon will finish up your work, then rest, this rainy day."

We turn upon the pillow now, broad day, all things are plain;

Our boyhood dream has vanished, and we are men again.

Dear mother, we will listen for your loving voice in vain,

We nevermore will hear your call mid the patter of the rain,

But if your spirit guards your boys, O never hold aloof

While we dream of boyhood's days, and it rains upon the roof.

## THE OUTSIDE CELLAR DOOR.

Most folks brought up in the country have slid  
down the cellar door  
When they was young and coltish, but  
I'm thinkin' enough sight more  
Have made it a place to recline on and kind o'  
lounge around  
On keenish days in springtime, when the sno's most  
left the ground  
'Cept what lays along the stone walls,  
And in hollers here and there—  
Just enough to hender fence makin', and keep a  
chilly air.

Then on Sunday, after meetin', when  
I've had a dinner good,  
And sunshine on the cellar door has been warmin'  
up the wood,  
I like to wander 'round there to the south side of  
the house,  
And git stretched out on the slopin' door as still  
as any mouse,  
While I hearken to the music of the little tricklin'  
rills  
That are coursin' toward the river from the snow-  
banks on the hills.

There I lay and dream, and listen, with my arm  
beneath my head,

To the phoebe that's explorin' for a home out in the  
shed;  
To the robin and the bluebird that are pipin' in the  
trees;  
To the buzzin' and the hummin' of warmed-over  
flies and bees;  
To the hens out in the barnyard—in the stable—  
on the hay,  
Tellin' all the world the story of the eggs they're  
bound to lay.

I hear lowin's from the stable, from the chicken  
coop a peep;  
The little lambs are frolickin' around the mother  
sheep;  
Then pretty soon I'm dozin' and I'm wakened by  
a snore—  
I've been sleepin' in the sunshine on the outside  
cellar door.

## FOR FIFTY CENTS.

UP to John Kannady's vandue—John let his farm  
this spring—

I didn't do quite like some men that seldom buy  
a thing

To a sale, but git there 'bout noon 'er a little before,  
An' set around in the women's way, an' spit on th'  
kitchen floor

Till they hear that dinner's ready; then, hurrah for  
a dog-cheap feast.

But I've noticed that them that waits fur grub most  
always buys the least.

I got my grub afore I went to Kannady's that day.  
The thing I wanted mostly was his double pleasure  
sleigh,

But *that* was sold when I got there; so I bid on some  
tackle blocks,

An' was butt'nin' up my coat to go, when John  
brought out a box

That held most ev'rything; he said they'd sell it by  
the lot,

An' when I bid four shillin' they took me on the  
spot.

Wa'll, I got the box home somehow, an' next day  
when it rained,

I took it to the wagon house to see what it contained.  
First come an old corn cutter an' a piece of leather  
tug,

A ridin' whip, two wuthless bits, a handle off a jug;

Come next an umbareller frame—the handle part was out;

A cradle knib, two old horseshoes, a hammer, less a snout,

A leaky wash-dish, an' a nub from off some critter's horn,

Three four-inch bolts, one five-inch, do, an ear of yeller corn,

Thirteen old nuts, a lump of chalk, a dozen feet of line,

Two bottles that had once contained some spur'ts of turpentine,

Five wornout cockeyes, an' a chunk of heavy harness hame,

An old plowshear, a black clay pipe, an empty honey frame,

A dozen ground-out reaper knives, a bit of fan mill screen,

A little pas'board box that once had held some paris green;

A chiny aig, some nails, all bent, a pair of terret rings,

A piece of tin, a rusty knife, an' lots of other things,  
That I can't so well remember, but you see, at all events,

That I didn't "shoot my granny" when I bid that fifty cents.

## RECEIVED AND ANSWERED.

“ Now how,” writes my city nephew, John,  
“ Are you and Aunt Sarah coming on?  
How are Steve and Will and Jen and Grace—  
How’s ev’rything on your dear old place?  
I hope your ’tatoes and corn are hilled,  
Your haying over, your barns well filled  
With a heavy crop of hay and rye,  
And room enough left for oats, by-’n’-by.

“ We’re kind o’ peaked, my wife and I,  
The weather has been so hot and dry;  
And we think there is no kind of doubt,  
But that you’re wanting us to come out  
And get away from the dust and heat,  
And taste Aunt Sarah’s good things to eat.  
So write me, please, that you will meet me,  
My wife, our nurse and our children three  
At depot, Saturday, half-past two;  
We’re coming to stay a month with you.”

And I wrote, “ John, city nephew, dear,  
We are all alive and kicking, here;  
Our potatoes and our corn are hilled  
And our barns with hay are nearly filled.  
We are looking for our oat crop now,  
To cram the top of every mow;  
When harvest is over, wet or dry,  
There’s thirty acres to plow for rye;

No time to play and no chance to shirk  
We work to live, and we live to work.

“ About the buildings things still go on  
The same as they did last summer, John.  
Your Aunt Sarah’s chicken crop has shrunk  
(The work of a predatory skunk).  
Our youngest porkers have learned to root,  
The apple orchard hangs full of fruit;  
The girls are making canned fruit and jell—  
Aunt Sarah attends to the dairy. Well!

“ I guess that’s ‘bout all I’ve got to say;  
The girls *were* planning to go away  
And rest a spell, and so were the boys;  
But they won’t go now, and miss the joys  
Of entertaining the friends they love,  
And the cooking for ‘em on a stove  
Some days in August; so come—come on,  
And bring your family with you, John;  
Aunt Sarah will greet you with a hug;  
We’ll wait on your fam’ly, nurse and pug.  
We won’t mind the work nor dust nor heat,  
When you’ve a good time and enough to eat.”

## A SUMMER CAMPAIGN.

STRANGE, that a feller's got to fight from early  
spring to fall,  
A-killin' bugs, an' worms, an' things, er else raise  
nothin' 'tall.  
The frost was hardly gone this spring, 'er sap had  
ceased to boil,  
Afore I was after th' worms' nests a-burnin' 'em out  
with oil.  
The next that came was 'tater bugs, the Colorado  
kind.  
I knocked 'em off an' stomped on 'em till I was al-  
most blind;  
I greened 'em and I purpled 'em till I could see no  
more,  
Then went a-huntin' currant worms by the dozen  
an' the score.  
The radishes an' turnips next, both come in for their  
share,  
For maggots was a-eatin' 'em; it almost made me  
swear,  
But I went for them air maggots an' knocked 'em  
out with drugs,  
An' then I stopped an' spent a day on pesky striped  
bugs  
That was eatin' up my cucumbers an' melon plants  
an' such,  
But I left 'em for to go an' give the cabbage worms  
a touch.

The corn field with cut worms an' grubs next called  
my best attention,  
An' I dug 'em out an' killed 'em, too, too numerous  
to mention.

Then I went an' sprayed my apple-trees with paris  
green an' brine,

An' applied the Bordeaux mixture to each young  
an' growin' vine.

The 'tater blight was on my patch 'n I het to tend  
to that,

An' hustle round an' smash enough squash bugs to  
fill my hat.

The gapes lit on my chickens as soon as they was  
born.

The tarnal grasshoppers have et the silk all off my  
corn.

In short, I've spent the summer a-fightin' worms  
an' slugs,

An' grasshoppers, an' crickets, an' moths, an' flies,  
an' bugs.

I've met the pests an' fit 'em an' put 'em all to rout,

An' now I set an' wonder that so little knocks 'em  
out.

## THE THUNDERSTORM.

ALL through the torrid, melting heat of that long,  
July day,  
Up and down we worked, perspiring, mid the win-  
rows of the hay;  
Not a wave upon the wheat field, not a twig upon  
the oak,  
Not a quiver of the poplar leaves, a passing breeze  
bespoke.

The sounds down in the meadow were the locust  
loud and harsh,  
The cricket by the brookside, the tree-frog on the  
marsh,  
While from the hazy valley came the sound of far-  
off train,  
The heavy, booming, hollow sound, that's heard  
before a rain.

We talked, while at the midday meal, of signs of  
sudden showers;  
One saw, that morn, a heavy dew upon the grass  
and flowers,  
The water jug was sweating too, that day so hot and  
dry,  
While still another one had heard a cuckoo's warn-  
ing cry.

We dozed beneath a spreading tree, our needed  
noonspell off,

Then led our well-fed horses to the dripping water trough;  
And while they drank, with anxious eyes we searched the sky so bright,  
But saw no cloud to promise us a show'r before the night.

So, in the meadow up and down, with pitchforks gleaming bright,  
With going wagon loaded, and returning wagon light;  
We gathered up our treasure, never stopping once to rest,  
For clouds were slowly gathering and darkening the west.

Such clouds! black, sullen, massive, came crowding up the blue;  
Shapes of human heads colossal, shapes of witch and devil too,  
Shape of castle, shape of tower, shape of chimney, turret, spire;  
Ever shifting, ever changing, tipped with golden sunlit fire,

Till the sun himself was covered and withdrew his glowing form,  
And the world stood still and waited for the coming of the storm.  
The darkened west looked like a night bereft of all its stars,

We saw the flash and heard the roll of God's electric cars.

We worked with silent, steady strokes, with much to lose or gain,

We saw from the horizon lift the curtain of the rain;

A curtain like a funeral pall, with ragged edge of white,

As onward, upward, swift it came, a giant in its might.

We heard beyond the distant hills a hurried, rushing roar,

A sound as of a waterfall, or great waves upon the shore.

The roar grew louder as the fringe of rain came o'er the wood,

We felt its cooling breath upon our faces where we stood.

Nor did we wait, but climbed upon our hardly finished load;

Then down the slope, and through the lane, and out into the road,

Our running horses took us as we raced before the wind,

And when the barn door welcomed us the storm was still behind.

Within the cool and roomy barn we sat by the open door,  
And saw the writhing, wind-swept trees, and watched the downward pour.  
The fitful lightning's glare we noted with each zig-zag flash,  
And wondered if it struck quite near with each loud thunder crash.

An hour passed by. The west once more resumed its azure hue,  
The setting sun threw out his beams upon raindrops thin and few.  
Across the east we saw God's bow; nature smiled, the air was warm.  
We bowed our heads and worshipped Him, and thanked Him for the storm. .

## HOT ENOUGH FOR HIM.

SAILOR Ben sat in the sun when the maiden came  
that way.

“ Hot enough for you, Uncle Ben? ” was what I  
heard her say.

“ Wa’al, yes,” the vet’ran made reply, “ that is, it’s  
*warm* somewhat,

But folks that live round here about hain’t seen a  
day that’s *hot*.

What do you say? it’s ninety-six! Why, that ain’t  
nothin’, child;

If you’d a-seen the day I did, ’twould fairly make  
you wild

With thinkin’ what you hed ben through, an’ that  
you’re still alive.

Ah, yes, how well I recollect, ’twas eighteen fifty-  
five

When Cousin Abe an’ Sime an’ me all went an’ hed  
our wish,

Runnin’ away on a mac’rel sloop to Newfoundland  
to fish.

“ That day? O, yes, I’ll git to *that*; ’twas August  
on the Banks,

Aloft hung the sails all lifeless, an’ on our deck the  
planks

Was twistin’ an’ warpin’ an’ curlin’ up with the  
scorchin’ heat,

An' none of us walked acrost 'em fur fear of blistered feet.

But we hed some compensation, I guess you will agree;

We ketched some nice biled mac'rel out of the steamin' sea.

Our ham an' aigs we put on deck an' let 'em lay a while;

They soon got fried, an' we eet 'em, miss, in reg'lar hotel style.

All seams b'iled out pitch an' oakum, an' the sailors scraped off some

Fur sech as were out of tobacker to use as chawin' gum.

"How did we live, did you ask me? I swan, I sca'cely know.

We was all packed in ice an' pickle, under the decks below;

As it was, Abe lost his whiskers, an' Sime's mustache come out,

An' as fur my hair, I hain't it, fur I shed it all about,  
Same as the rest of thet crew did, endurin' all that heat,

Fur we was roasted through and through, same as a piece of meat.

How high was the thermomcter? O, please don't ask sech stuff;

We hed a glass mos' four feet long, but 'twasn't long enough,

So we—ah, you're goin', be you? Wa'al, I think  
you will agree  
That the day we hed on the Banks was quite hot  
enough fur me."  
She went, and the sailor muttered: "That's eighteen  
times to-day  
I've ben asked that same old ches'nut; now, what'll  
a feller say?"

---

### THE LAST LOAD OF HAY.

THE wheat and the rye have been housed for a fort-night,  
The golden oats glow in the sun on the hill,  
The sheds and the lofts are all bulging with clover,  
And bays full of timothy rise from the sill.

The mower is silent—its labors are over,  
To-day it was drawn from the low meadow swale,  
Where grass along ditches, blue lilies and bulrush,  
Was separate kept from the hay cut for sale.

" So drive to the meadow, the old bottom meadow,  
The swale where the grass grew so thick and so  
rank,  
Not extra hay, true, but for feeding horned cattle  
Some day in the winter 'twill beat a snowbank.

“ Now pitch it on lively, that cloud in the west there  
May give us a show’r ’ere the close of the day,  
But we will not mind it, when under the ridge pole  
Is landed for this year our last load of hay.”

---

## COWBELLS IN A DREAM.

ONC’T—no, ’twa’n’t a “ midnight dreary,”  
Neither was I weak, but weary,  
Fur I had dug potaters all that long September  
day.  
I was peacefully a-sleepin’,  
And at twelve o’clock was keepin’  
Time to snorin’ respiration in a satisfact’ry way.  
  
Of my boyhood I was dreamin’,  
And it seemed and kep’ a-seemin’  
That I het to drive the cows up from the wood-  
land pastur’ lot.  
Seemed I couldn’t find them cattle,  
Tho’ I heard the cowbell’s rattle,  
With its “ tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,” as it moved from  
spot to spot.

Goin’ off and comin’ nearer,  
Gittin’ faint and growin’ clearer,  
Soundin’ jes’ the same as cowbells has ben  
soundin’ sence they wuz—

From the woods where sung the thrushes,  
From the swamp where growed the rushes,  
And mos' frequently was heard the gentle, soft,  
musketeer's buzz.

In the valley 'mong the beeches,  
Where the sunshine seldom reaches,  
Where the solemn little screech-owl ust to set so  
grave and still,  
Through the sap-bush in the open,  
Dillydallyin' and mopin'—  
“Tinkle, tinkle,” toward the pine-tree with the  
dove's nest on the hill.

Down along the little brooklet,  
Where with bent pins for a hooklet  
We e'er sought to ketch the minny dartin' to and  
fro so spry,  
And the darnin'-needle's quiver  
Through the sunlight made us shiver,  
While our ears we quickly covered when he went  
a-flashin' by;

But he never, never, never,  
Made the smallest, slight endeavor,  
For to sew our youthful ears up while we stoned  
the solemn frog,  
Drove the water-snake to cover,  
Searched for nests of snipe and plover,  
Or we knee-deep waded in to catch the frisky  
polliwog.



"DOWN ALONG THE LITTLE BROOKLET."



"Tinkle, tinkle," the cows were comin'  
Through the dingle where the hummin'  
    Of wild bees once give idea thet a bee-tree was  
        at hand—  
'Neath the maples in the holler,  
Where one fall we earned a dollar,  
    Diggin' ginseng where it flourished in the rich  
        and leafy sand.

Then it was a rainy Sunday,  
Saturday er mebbe Monday,  
    When we donned our father's overcoat and  
        started down the lane—  
Ruther likin' the sensation,  
Kind o' courtin' approbation,  
    Fur the feat of drivin' cattle from the pastur' in  
        the rain.

At the bars we stopped and listened,  
While each leaf and grass-blade glistened  
    With the moisture that was tricklin' from our  
        nose and chin and hair,  
Little ruther hoped we wouldn't,  
And was better pleased we couldn't  
    Hear the tinkle of the cowbell on the damp and  
        foggy air.

Fur what chances fur sight-seein'!  
There was double chance of bein'  
    Bears and painters, wolves and wild cats,  
        crouchin' neath the bushes dank.

What if all the wild creation  
Hid there in the vegetation,

And would make one swoop upon us!—but our  
spirit never shrank.

Fur what glor'ous pools of water,  
That we should not—but we oughter,

Wade right through to get the cattle at the fur  
side of the lot;

And, then, what a splendid wettin'  
Fell to us fur jes' a-gettin'

Cattle round among the bushes where we knowed  
that they was not.

Then the cowbell's "tinkle, tinkle"  
Changed our tactics in a twinkle,

And we rounded up the cattle in the most ap-  
provëd style,

And we started from the pastur',  
Splashin' 'long a trifle faster,

Lookin' out fur bears and painters in the bushes  
all the while.

Why, of course, we didn't sight 'em,  
So we didn't have to fight 'em,

But we tinkle, tinkle, tinkled to the barnyard with  
the kine,

Very wet and quite contented,  
P'haps to be well complimented,

And escape from further labor, which was very,  
very fine.

So, it seemed and kep' a seemin',  
As I lay there sweetly dreamin',  
    While the cattle with their cowbell was a-tearin'  
        at my corn.  
Fur I found out in the mornin'  
That my cattle had ben "cornin',"  
    While I had dreamed the sweetest dream I've  
        dreamed sence I was born.

---

## COW TIME

Cow time; and in October, in the days of long ago.  
Come, Shep, old fellow, hurry up; I think you're  
    very slow;  
But then, too, I remember, I remember with a sigh,  
That you've been dead for eighteen years and I,  
    alas—well, I  
Am older by a score of years than when we used to  
    roam  
Out to the fallow pasture old to drive the cattle  
    home.

So, Shep, old dog, we'll go once more while mem'ry  
    still is bright;  
We'll take the path out through the woods and fetch  
    the cows to-night.  
Here, you, no nonsense! Keep behind; you fool,  
    where have you heard

That shepherd dogs are swift enough to catch a yellow bird?

What, found a track? I guess you have—a wood-chuck's, I declare.

Ah, here's his hole. Go for him, Shep! We'll have him out of there.

Wait, dog; stand back, right where you are; I'll show that chuck a trick.

Stand back, I say, and wait a bit; I'll poke him with a stick.

Jab! jab! It's deep, that woodchuck hole; see how it twists and bends.

Oh! there he runs! I should have known—some chuck holes have two ends.

I'm down; no matter, get him, Shep! He ran up on that knoll.

No use, come back; just as I thought, he's got another hole.

Come on. Hello! I didn't know the burs were open yet.

Lie down, old dog, I'll take a climb, there's chestnuts here to get,

A pocket full; that's pretty good, I've something now to chew.

You wag your tail; do you want some? Do dogs like chestnuts, too?

Well, take a couple; now we'll go. Hi! there's a squirrel; now we

Must catch him. Pshaw! He's got away up in  
a hemlock tree,

And we have lost him. Let him go. Now here's  
the pasture bars;

You find the cows and fetch 'em up, or we will see  
the stars

Before we see the milking yard; it's plump a half  
a mile;

So, sick 'em, Shep, and round 'em up and I will rest  
me while

I eat this Seek-no-further and this Pippin that I  
found

Out in that pile of apples where they're lying on the  
ground.

Ah, here you come. Have you them all? Here's  
Speckle, Spot and Jess,

Old Brownie, Molly, Lill and Dot, but not old bell  
cow, Bess.

So, sir, go back and find that cow; come, lively!  
You can tell

Just where she is, for she's the cow that wears the  
copper bell.

Some dogs know lots; he won't be long. I hear the  
bell, I think,

Down in the hollow by the spring where she has  
stopped to drink.

There, there! Don't run her; steady, now! Her  
heels—don't bite her nose.

She's through; just start them down the lane—I've  
got the bars to close—  
And then we'll drive 'em slowly home, and stop our  
dreamy song,  
For driving cows is not for men, nor dogs that's  
dead so long.

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### SAM PURDY'S HUSKIN' BEE.

LATE years most all huskin' is done in the field,  
Or by huskin' machines, when markets and yield  
Will warrant expense. It ain't often that we  
Are asked to a reg'lar old sort huskin' bee;  
And a tickelder man I don't think could be found,  
Than I was last week, when Sam Purdy come  
round  
And invited us down; for he'd made up his mind  
That he'd have a bee of the old-fashioned kind,  
On next We'n'sday night. Of course we all went.  
Old-fashioneder evening I never have spent.

The corn was all picked and piled on the barn floor,  
From the lean-to on back to the big rollin' door;  
And a seat had been fixed out of beehives and  
planks  
At the edge of the pile; while beyond the big bank  
Of corn had been rigged out of boards a long bin,

That after we stripped 'em the ears were thrown in.  
Some forks, handle first, had been thrust in the hay  
That walled up the barn at the side of the bay,  
And the pumpkins that stuck on the fork tines so  
    bright,  
Each held up a candle to furnish us light.

It was eight when the seat was well loaded with  
    men,  
But they kept droppin' in till between nine and ten;  
So the husks piled behind us, and O, what a din  
The naked ears made as they fell in the bin!  
While we talked as we worked, of the weather and  
    crops,  
Of the price of potatoes and apples and hops,  
Of politics, too, of free silver and gold;  
And Sam passed some "hardware" to keep out the  
    cold—  
Which practice, at bees, some condemn as not right;  
But most took a little and no one got tight.

At 'leven, we finished and argered a while  
The number of bushels of ears in the pile;  
"Three hundred and fifty!" "four hundred!" said  
    some.  
It wasn't decided when Purdy said, "Come,  
The women are waitin' to give us a bite."  
Then we all foller'd him to the house where a light  
Was placed in the woodshed, nearby to a tub  
Of lukewarm soft water. A wash, and a rub

On a towel, and we marched with the willingest  
feet

To the long kitchen table, where all found a seat,  
And made, like an army, a valiant attack  
Upon the good victuals piled up like a stack.

There was apple pie, pumpkin pie, cookies and cake,  
Cream cheese and corn bread of Mis' Purdy's rare  
make,

Baked beans, mashed potatoes and juicy boiled ham,  
Hot biscuit and coffee and raspberry jam.

Did we make out a meal? Well, we did, as we  
ought,

Then adjourned to the woodshed, where Sam come  
and brought

New pipes and tobacker for such as would smoke.

There, many a story and many a joke

Were told 'ere we bid ev'rybody good-night,

And started away from the circle of light

Toward our homes. I'll allow it's not much of  
a yarn,

But years were lived over in Sam Purdy's barn.

## THE FALL CRICKET.

SOME evening, before the sweet languor of summer  
Has once more succumbed to the cool breath of  
fall,

Down deep in the grasses and thick vines and bushes  
He chirps, and we hear his prophetical call.

“ The summer is waning,” he mournfully tells us,  
“ The roses and daisies are fading away;  
Already the night laps its dusky wings over  
The hour that was yesterday part of the day.

“ ’Tis coming, ’tis coming—October is coming,  
The month of cool nights and bright sunny days,  
Of many-hued forests, good cheer, autumn fulness,  
To close amid frost and sad, leaf-strown high-  
ways.

“ I’m with you, I’ll tarry, right under your window  
You’ll hear my low voice with its metal-like ring,  
Till bats, birds and insects, save me, have retreated;  
Clear into November I’ll merrily sing;

“ Take comfort, be merry, life has but one journey,  
Live, love and be happy, bless God for your home,  
Close doors and draw shades, snuggle up to the  
fireside,  
And hear my farewell, for my going has come.”

## OUR THANKSGIVING.

BETSEY and I have been nowheres; we've worked  
all summer hard,  
So's I was lookin' round one day and come across  
a card,  
I said to Betsey, " Now, look here, I think I heard  
you say  
You'd kinder like to go somewhere on next Thanks-  
givin' day;  
I've found the card that Chester left when they was  
here in June  
And July and in August, and they said they hoped  
that soon  
They'd have the chance to welcome us, when we'd  
a-mind to come  
To visit them and see the sights around their city  
home.

When Cousin Chester's folks was here, I liked 'em  
very well,  
Although his wife was pretty nice, and he was quite  
a swell;  
'Twas funny, too, to see their girls, all drest in  
summer silk,  
Each with her little silver cup a-taggin' you for  
milk.  
But that was just their city way; they knew we  
didn't mind,

And when we go to see them, we'll a rousing welcome find.

Now I propose we hustle round and do up all our work,

And go and spend Thanksgiving with our cousins in New York."

Well, Betsey quite agreed with me; that very day I wrote

To tell 'em we was comin' on the We'nesday evening boat.

I went down to Si Smith's that night to buy a butter pail,

So thought I'd post my letter when I stopped to get my mail.

There was a letter there for me; "New York," the postmark said;

I opened it right there and then, and this is what I read:

"DEAR COUSINS: If myself and wife and children are alive,

We'll reach Smithville railroad depot on Wednesday, half-past five.

Please meet us at the station with wagon or with sleigh,

For we will come to see you and spend Thanksgiving day."

I didn't post my letter when I got through readin' that,

For the name wrote at the bottom was Chester A.  
Surratt.

If they was comin' to our house, of course, we must  
stay home

To fix for 'em. Yes, Betsey was disappointed some;  
While she was gittin' supper I thought I heard her  
sigh,

And I'm pretty certain that I saw a tear stand in  
her eye.

But Betsey's reputation as a hostess was at stake;  
There were pies and cakes and puddings and other  
things to make;

She'd no time for disappointment or feelin' down  
and blue,

She knew she had this work on hand, and she would  
do it, too.

When We'nesday afternoon had come, 'long 'bout  
half-past four,

She took me to the butt'ry and opened up the door.  
Well, now! I've heard of groanin' boards and  
tables all my life,

But butt'ry shelves just laugh out loud when loaded  
by my wife.

I can't tell you the things I saw when lookin' at that  
load,

I jumped into my wagon and started down the road,

For to fetch home Cousin Chester, his wife and  
daughters three.

They was there, and home I fetched 'em all as happy  
as could be.

Well, the next day was Thanksgiving, and we had  
such a feast,

But she that had prepared the spread enjoyed her-  
self the least;

For she had to wait on others, and when the feast  
was done,

And we went into the parlor then to have a little  
fun,

Dear Betsey wasn't with us, *she* must wash the  
dishes all,

While Chester's daughter sung a song—something  
about a ball.

What with washin' up the dishes and fixin' supper,  
too,

Betsey's visitin' minutes were pretty thin and few.  
The comp'ny had a good time, though, they stayed  
till after ten,

They asked us to come and see 'em, over and over  
again.

They said they would come next summer, when  
I saw 'em on the train;

There wa'n't any doubt about that, but I didn't  
speak so plain;

But told 'em we'd expect 'em, and when the train  
moved on,

I s'pose 'twas mean, but I was glad the company was  
gone.

'Twas something after 'leven when I got into the house,  
My wife was settin' in a chair as still as any mouse.  
When I set down she come and perched herself upon my knee,  
And then she done a thing she hain't since eighteen eighty-three.  
She cried for fifteen minutes, sobbin' tenderly and low;  
When I asked of the matter, she answered kinder slow—  
“I thought—I hoped—I wished so much”—and then she raised her head,  
“I think—I *know* I'm very tired, I guess I'll go to bed.”

AT NIGHT WHEN THE CHORES IS  
DONE.

THERE ain't much rest fur a farmer from spring  
to end of summer;

If he keeps his work up snug and tight he's got to  
be a hummer.

He ain't got time to set around and think of takin'  
pleasure

When twelve to sixteen hours he gits of laber's  
fullest measure.

But along late in October when the leaves hev  
tumbled down,

An' the woods an' fields an' hillsides are all turnin'  
dry and brown,

When his appetite is sure to be in keepin' with the  
season,

An' calls fur roast pertaters, pork an' pancakes out  
of reason,

Then life is worth the livin', for he's bound to hev  
some fun

When he knocks off work an' goes th' house, at  
night when the chores is done.

In November when a feller is a-plowin' ev'ry day,  
Er December when he's thrashin' rye er drawin' off  
his hay,

Perhaps, jest to accommodate, he helps a neighbor  
kill,

Er drives ten miles to market, er takes some grain  
to mill.

At all events he's whackin' round all day out in the  
cold—

That's nuthin', fur we're ust to it, we farmers young  
and old.

Tain't long hours that he's 'fraid of, an' exposure  
makes him tough,

But when the day draws toward its close, an' wind  
gits cold an' rough,

He surely is excusable fur lookin' at the sun,  
An' longin' fur to git th' house, at night when the  
chores is done.

I tell you, when the cattle all hev been put in an'  
fed,

The sheep shut up, an' colts an' horses from the  
water led,

An' stand in straw up to their knees, a-grindin'  
grain and hay,

When doors are shut, to you has come the best part  
of the day.

What care you fur the driftin' snow when all is  
snug and warm?

You set down by the kitchen fire an' listen to the  
storm,

An' smell the sassage fryin'—the pretty cook's your  
wife—

An' wonder how it comes that some don't like a  
farmer's life;

Then Johnnie wants to tell you what he learnt to school that day,  
Er Jennie tells about her pullet that has just begun to lay.  
You're delighted with their chatter an' yer pleasure's just begun,  
While yer waitin' fur yer supper, at night when the chores is done.

The city man, fur all of me, can set around his heater,  
An' read by electricity er gaslight from a meter.  
Perhaps he'll warm his slippert feet by steam in copper things,  
An' figger on the currency his store or office brings,  
But as fur me, when, supper o'er, I draw a little nigher  
Up to the stove and poke at it to git a better fire,  
'Taint strikes, er stocks, er panic times that ever bothers me;  
I read my weekly paper with my children on my knee.  
My stocks is in my cellar an' I'm bound to have some fun  
When I set down after supper, at night when the chores is done.

DAN'S CELLAR AND MINE.

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## A TALE OF HARD TIMES.

*I've* never seen such times, I growled; never, not  
sence I was born.

Had a rompin' crop of Injun, but there ain't no sale  
fur corn;

Planted a lot o' potaters—got 'bout a third of a  
crop—

*Then* 'fore I got 'em to market—bang! they het to  
go an' drop,

Along with our rye, an' buckwheat, an' butter an'  
eggs an' oats,

An' our beef an' pork. Now tell me the use of  
us raisin' shotes

At four an' a half a hundred, fur pork when the  
hogs are fat,

Er fruit at fifty cents er less, the bar'l throwed in  
at that.

Hay market's b'en doin' middlin' well, an' there  
you are again!

I hadn't much hay on my place—*we* suffered for  
want o' rain;

Jes' so I kep on a-frettin', an' lower my sperrits  
sank,

Till I was a grunt-me-growley—a regular hard-  
times crank;

Till I went one time to market—'twas a cold Decem-  
ber day—

An' took along some apples an' some eggs to pay  
my way.

My eggs went quick; I sold 'em all, an' begun to  
look around,

But a man a-wantin' apples wasn't quite so easy  
found.

Still, I hadn't many unsold toward night, when the  
wind grew keen,

An' I fur home was pullin' straight, when there on  
the street I seen

A man who once had lived our way; out with us he  
used to till

A farm, but he had moved to town to work into  
a mill.

"Here, Dan," calls I, "come, buy these Spitz, I  
ain't got but a few,

Pretty nigh onto a bar'l full, an' I'll sell 'em cheap  
to you."

Dan come over to my wagon, from the sidewalk  
where he stood—

I noticed he had on old cloe's, and wasn't a-lookin'  
good.

Says he, "Ben, I'd like them apples, fur we hain't  
a one at home,

But I ain't got a cent to pay, an' yer pay has got  
to come."

I said, "I'll wait till pay day, Dan." The poor  
feller give a smile,

An' said, " Ben, if you wait fur that, you will haf  
to wait awhile;  
The mill shut down three months ago—' hard  
times,' so the owners said,  
An' sence that time I've done odd jobs—almost  
anything for bread.  
Sometimes we have it, then agin there isn't a single  
cent  
To buy us bread an' potaters, not to mention coal  
an' rent."

I felt that I must say *somethin'*. " How's yer wife  
an' boys? " says I.  
" Wife is sick an' children hungry," an' poor Dan  
begun to cry.  
Gee—mo—*nee!* a cryin' woman's bad *enough*, all  
men agree,  
But a cryin' man's a *settler*; an' his whimperin'  
settled me.  
" You git in here, Dan," I blubbered, " show me to  
the house you rent."  
He got in, an', sayin' nothin', round to Dan'l's house  
we went.  
" Now," says I, " out with them apples, ketch the  
bar'l right by the chines!"  
So we did, an' in that cellar I seen somethin' *like*  
*hard times.*

Nothin', absolutely nothin', 'cept a half a loaf of  
bread,

P'rhaps a dozen small potaters, an' a piece of cabbage head.

Wait, there *was* two sticks of kindlin', an' a peck er so of coal—

That was ev'rything there was there, in that city cellar hole.

I went home a-thinkin' deeply, all that seven miles of drive,

An' come mighty near concludin' that the meanest man alive

Was a-settin' in my wagon. Here I'd b'en a growling crank,

An' b'en cussin' all creation, when I'd every cause to thank

The good Lord fur many blessin's. Well, I drove in home all right,

After dark, but Jane was waitin' fur to help me with a light,

An' when my team was blanketed, an' was stabled safe and sound,

I took the light that Jane had brought, an' I had a look around.

Ten Jersey cows, all thoroughbred, was stanchioned in a row,

A pair of colts an' twenty sheep was housed from the cold an' snow.

An' while my mows wan't like some years, jest a-bilin' over full,

I didn't lack fur feed enough, hay, grain and stalks to pull

My live stock through till pasture come; with a chance of some to sell.

Then, havin' seen to ev'rything, an' findin' that all was well,

I made a break for my supper, passin', as I went along,

My chicken house full of Leg'orns, full a hundred pullets strong,

A pigpen an' a crib of corn, the same that I couldn't sell

Last fall—I didn't care that night, I thought it was just as well;

An' last a smokehouse full of meat—smoke came from every vent—

As I walked past to the kitchen, and down in the cellar went.

I took an inventory quick of *my* cellar standin' there.

I'd seen a hard times cellar, mind, that day, an' I declare

I didn't know we had so much; nor where we had got it all.

We hadn't stocked our cellar up no more'n we'd any fall,

But there was bar'l's of apples, maybe twenty, one of pork,

A dozen of fine potaters; an' to see the women's work—

Why, that swing shelf in our cellar was jes' loaded with canned fruit;

We had four big jars of butter, an' a great cream cheese to boot.

And I—I come right out o' there, fur I couldn't stand no more.

What right had I—old grumble-put—to be hoardin' up a store

While folks in the towns was starvin'? O, my head was all a-buzz;

I thought I knowed, but I didn't realize what hard times wuz.

We farmers ain't got the money that we had some years ago,

We can't spread ourselves so muchly, we can't make quite so much show;

But there's one thing we *are* sure of—a good livin', that is it—

The thing we all strive an' work for—that's all the best of us git.

“ COLD, AIN’T IT?”

THE morning was a cold one, that I knew beyond  
a doubt,

So I made my preparations before I started out;  
Put on my warmest ulster and turned up its collar  
rare,

Then in overshoes and mittens sought the keen and  
frosty air.

First I met was Uncle Dan'l, man of color, old and  
grave,

And he greeted me politely; then this information  
gave—

“ Cold, ain’t it?”

Then came Jenkins; he’s a farmer, riding on a load  
of hay,

Swath’d in felts and shawls and mufflers, yet he  
found a voice to say—

“ Cold, ain’t it?”

Pretty little widow Collyer, going up to Smith’s  
for milk,

Paused just long enough to murmur from beneath  
her hood of silk—

“ Cold, ain’t it?”

The stamp clerk, from his window, gave to me a  
pleasant smile,

As he handed me my letter, piping out in parrot style—

“Cold, ain’t it?”

My barber, while he shaved me, my groc’ry keeper,  
too,

Indeed, ev’ry one that knew me kept the fact held  
up to view—

“Cold, ain’t it?”

Soon I began to ponder and discovered with surprise

That my neighbors must be thinking me all foolish,  
or all wise,

With their—“Cold, ain’t it?”

Why! I knew beyond denial that it was a frosty day,

But they must have thought I didn’t when they hastened all to say—

“Cold, ain’t it?”

Still they recognized my wisdom and the knowledge I had got,

When they told me it was frosty and then asked me if ’twas not,

With their—“Cold, ain’t it?”

## 'BOUT TAX TIME.

LONG about first of Feb'ry, er before, there comes  
a spell  
When the farmers round here begin to hustle; you  
c'n tell  
Then who's forehanded, fur ev'ry one of us want  
some cash,  
An' there ain't very many farmers but what feel  
the lash  
    Of poverty—'bout Tax Time.

Of course, there's some fellers, pretty well fixed,  
don't mind the drain;  
But they're pretty mid'lin' sca'ce that ain't obliged  
to strain  
Themselves jest a little, when the collector comes  
around;  
There ain't any puttin' the thing off, the money  
must be found,  
    To settle with—'bout Tax Time.

Some of us have a habit of haulin' out wood to sell;  
Some put up pigs er beef critters an' feed 'em pretty  
well,  
An' turn 'em into money along with some oats er  
hay—  
I tell you the road to market's hot, jest before the  
day  
    We must git there—'bout Tax Time.

I know it's all well an' right; we'd ought to pay our  
share

Tow'rds keepin' things a-runnin'; but I sometimes  
wonder where

The mortgagees hide their money bags so's not to  
pay no tax,

While mortgagors most haf' to sell the coats from  
off their backs

To raise the wind—'bout Tax Time.

Seems when a man pays int'rest, an' that's what  
most of us do,

He'd ought to be protected from payin' *all* taxes,  
too;

I don't see how we're to mend it, maybe the future  
will,

But I think the future'll find us hustlin' for money  
still,

For collectors—'bout Tax Time.

## PUZZLED.

FEB'RY second's long been set apart  
Ez a sort of breathin' place, to start  
Havin' more winter, er havin' less,  
That all depends—an' I must confess  
To its puzzlin' me.

*Is it “Candlemas,” that second day,  
Er jes “Calamuss”? I’ve heard folks say  
The word both ways, so I never know,  
An’ ’tween the two I blunderin’ go,  
Fur they puzzle me.*

On Cal?—Candlemas, *some* beast comes out  
Of his winter hole to gaze about.  
'F he sees his shadder, the story old  
Says: “ Back he goes from frost an’ cold.”  
It don’t puzzle *him*.

If the day should be cloudy, then he  
Is jes’ as happy as he c’n be;  
Fur winter’s over; the snow will melt,  
'N’ he’ll fill that vacume ’neath his pelt;  
That’s puzzlin’ him.

Now, I ruther hold the brute’s a bear;  
There’s them says “ woodchuck ”—  
I don’t care—

Maybe he is. Which? I don't know.  
Very much further'n that I can't go,  
Fur it puzzles me.

Another base fur dispute I've found:  
How many times does the beast turn 'round,  
'Fore he views the sun? Some say 'leven,  
Others contend it's only seven,  
An' *that* puzzles me.

He never moves till eggsactly noon;  
One minute before would be too soon.  
Does he know that noon on Plymouth rock,  
At the Golden Gate, means nine o'clock?  
Don't that puzzle *him*?

Did he see his shadder, Saturday?  
He did, an' didn't, I heard 'em say;  
If 'twas seen in Troy, an' not in Maine,  
The first'll have frost, the latter rain,  
Fur to puzzle 'em.

They'll be plantin' in Ontario,  
While Jersey stan's to her neck in snow.  
Dakota will have her sowin' done  
'Fore the ice-bound streams of Ohio run;  
Won't that puzzle 'em?

There's compensation; the brute is old;  
Some day he will ketch his death of cold.

We'll block his hole so he can't git out  
To see what the Feb'ry sun's about;  
That will puzzle him.

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### THE WEATHER PROPHETS.

ROUND the stove at the village store  
On a chilly night, sat half a score  
Of friends and neighbors; they were all  
Tillers of soil from spring to fall,  
All interested in every way  
In the current markets of the day,  
In butter and cheese, and wheat and oats,  
In fat'ning cattle and wint'ring shotes,  
All anxious to hear of the price of rye,  
All praying for rain; for the ground was dry.

All elderly men were they, and wise  
In studying signs in earth and skies,  
Of coming storm or lasting drouth,  
And these are the ways they found them out:

“A storm is comin’,” said Mr. White,  
“For the black on the kettle burnt to-night.”  
“A storm is brewin’,” cried Mr. Green,  
“For this unfailin’ sign I’ve seen—  
My pigs have been makin’ nests of hay,  
And fixin’ things for a rainy day.”  
“And I,” chimed in good Deacon Wright,

“ I heard my roosters crow las’ night;  
I told Jane Ann ’twould surely blow,  
Er rain, er hail, er maybe snow.”

“ There is no doubt,” spoke up Squire Brown,  
“ For ’s I was comin’ home from town,  
The dust kep’ rollin’ toward the right,  
Instid of left; that tells a sight

About a storm that’s comin’ soon.”

Said Jabez Smith, “ To-night’s new moon  
'S a wet one.” “ Yes,” broke in a friend;  
“ 'Tis all of that; stands on its end;  
It can’t hold water; ’twill run out  
Upon the earth without a doubt.”

“ My dog e’t grass,” observed John Spoon.  
Some one had heard a screaming loon  
And squaking goose. All did their share  
To coax the storm from out its lair.  
The storm must come, what could prevent?  
'Twas pass’d upon without dissent  
By one and all before their flight  
To diff’rent homes to spend the night.

The morning came all bright and warm,  
Without a semblance of a storm;  
Fair weather held for full a week,  
And if one to the seers would speak,  
The seer would say without a smile,  
“ It will be dry yet for awhile;  
That storm 'twas comin'? You git out!  
The best of signs fail in a drouth.”

## SOMEWHAT SELFISH.

ME and my comfort ain't the hull thing. I'll own right up to that.  
Other fellers don't like the clo'es I wear, others don't like my hat,  
An' there's some that take exception to the way I dress my feet,  
The mixed tobacker that I smoke, an' the things I like to eat.  
Most folks like a kind o' weather, nigh all of 'em likes it fair—  
Not too hot, but sort o' coolish, with a gently stirrin' air.  
As fur me—I like all weather, come it cold, come wet, come warm;  
But fur downright keen enjoyment, jes' give me a blizzard storm.  
I s'pose I'm kind o' selfish, an' out o' the general run,  
Fur there's lots of men that don't regard a blizzard as much fun,  
Ner I don't believe I would myself, that is, if I was out,  
An' was tired, an' cold, an' hungry, an' was drivin' with about  
Ten miles of road before me. No, them ain't the times that strike  
Me as so very joyous. But I'll tell you what I like—

It's to keep watch of the weather when we've got  
a foot er so  
Of snow that's dry and dusty—to begin to see it go,  
Sort o' curlin' off the corners of the barn roof, an'  
the trees,  
When the wind that's shifted to the west ain't much  
more than a breeze,  
But increasin' ev'ry minute, till the air is full of  
snow,  
Pilin' up in sheltered places, makin' mount'ins in  
a row;  
Throwin' fences, tossin' branches, roarin', tearin',  
ridin' high,  
Most obliteratin' lan'scapes, flyin' mad across the sky,  
Rattlin' doors an' shakin' shutters, searchin' crev-  
ices an' cracks,  
Drivin' sheep around the straw stack, lodgin' on  
the cattle's backs.  
Then we muffle up an' stagger through the snow  
banks, 'gainst the wind,  
Gaspin', strugglin', hustlin', bustlin', out o' breath  
an' almost blind,  
Till we reach the shelt'rín' stable, time fur chores  
an' almost night,  
Stable, feed an' shake down beddin', see that all is  
snug an' tight.  
Then to house, an easy matter, fur the wind is on  
our backs,  
Breakin' paths—fur Mr. Blizzard long has covered  
up our tracks.

Now a visit to the pigpen, pail o' water, box o' wood;  
Then begins the very minute that a blizzard does me good.

Fur I set before the stove hearth, comfortable, snug an' warm,  
Heark'nin' to the moanin' chimbley, listenin' to the howlin' storm.  
Somewhat selfish? Yes, I know it, so is ev'ry man you strike.  
Some men don't enjoy a blizzard, neither are all men alike.

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### TIME TO QUIT.

I was considered *some* on prophesyin' weather—  
Jes' give me one sweepin' look—I could tell whether It would rain er snow, accordin' to the season,  
An' I never made perditions 'thout a reason.  
Come a lemon-colored sundown aiged with sam'un—  
Call it weather-wisdom, instinct, call it gammon,  
Ez you please—I said, Ol' Mister West is comin';  
An' he always *did*, an' set all things a-hummin'.  
                        But I've quit.

Red sunrises was another special feature;  
An' if I do say it, there wa'n't a creature

Livin' and breathin' as could beat me seein' rings  
Around the sun er moon—sundogs an' such like  
things.

When watchin' on Can'lmas day, I spec'ly shone;  
Fur careless ones never'd notice, an' I alone  
Hed the honor of tellin' if the bear come out,  
An' went back in his hole, er kep' stayin' about.  
But I've quit.

When it come to readin' hogs' melts, I was there,  
depend—

Thin, thick er bulgin, at one er the other end.  
One kin foretell sights o' weather when he's killin'  
hogs,

Almost as much as watchin' Feb'uary fogs—  
Which means—but *there*, I've said that I would  
never

Perdict ag'in. *I* that once was thought so clever  
By all of my friends an' neighbors an' by myself,  
Hes jes' gone out o' bizness, an' crawled onto the  
shelf.

Fur I've quit.

"Lookouts" a-givin' cries, er swallers flyin' low,  
White-coated snowbirds round, fetchin' a storm of  
snow,

Smoke a-fallin' down, the same as a lump o' lead,  
Pigs a-carryin' straws to make a stormy bed,  
Mare tails crossin' the sky, thunder heads in the  
west,

White frosts an' holler air—they all kin take a rest.  
Folks hes got out o' me all the weather they'll git.  
Mebbe they'll come ask me—I won't let up a bit.  
    Fur I've quit.

I've quit because the newspapers are publishin' each day

What they've heard some dude in Washin'ton er Philadelphia say;

To wit: "High winds will rage to-day on the Pacific coast,

In Canady they'll shiver, an' in Floridy they'll roast;

They's an airie of low pressure along the Yaller-stone,

Of all the States, 'twill rain in Injeanny jes' alone,  
Drouth continues in Kintuckey, an' in Maine the pressure's high,

'Twill be cool in Minnesota, an' the Gulf States will be dry."

    Yes, I've quit.

So what's the use of tryin' to be keen an' weather-wise,

An' studyin', fur nothin' 'tall, the earth, the air an' skies,

When folks git their patent weather in the papers ev'ry day.

Why, I've heard 'em right afore me, talkin' to each other, say,

"Uncle Eben isn't in it prophesyin' any more;

Git yer weather from the papers er the notice at the store."

Then I turn away in sorrow, but there's one thought does me good:

A prophet's seldom honored in his native neighborhood.

So he quits.

---

### THE LUNACY OF CYRUS KENT.

It must have ben twenty years ago sence Sam Black sez to me:

"Cy Kent is a-gittin' crazy." "No!" "Well, that he *is*," sez he.

"He's went an' gone right off his head." "Why, what *has* he done?" sez I.

"Done! 'tain't no one but a crazy man 'twould ever go an' buy

Two hundred of young, sour churries, an' set 'em out in rows

Up onto that stony ridge of his where nothin' ever grows

Exceptin' some quack an' johnswort, hoss sorrel an' golden-rod;

But here this 'ere precious lunatic's ben tearin' up the sod

An' plantin' it out to churries; it's a notion that he's got,

An' he'll foller out his notion to his ruin, like as  
not;  
Fur black knot an' cat-a-pillers, an' them worms  
that eats up fruit,  
Will take in his little churry trees an' Cy Kent's  
cash to boot."

Ner it wasn't only Black alone who 'lowed that  
Kent was rash,  
Fur we all lived on an' waited fur to see him go to  
smash.  
But never a bit would that Kent smash, as we all  
thought he would,  
Tho' each of us argered with him fur to show him  
where he stood.  
But he still kep' on a-plantin'—apples, churries,  
plums an' pears;  
Jes' a-mindin' his own bizness, tendin' to his own  
affairs,  
Which was diggin', prunin', trimmin'. Seemed his  
work was never done,  
Fur he went to fertilizin', an' with somethin' like  
a gun  
Was a-squirtin' pizened water, which he said would  
kill the bugs,  
Circuliars, cat-a-pillers, animalculers and slugs;  
But when he got 'round to "Fungies," in a confi-  
denshall tone,  
Then it was *too* much. We fled an' left that lunatic  
alone.

Which we've ben a-doin' sence then, fur we couldn't  
see the sense  
Of his buyin' bone an' potash, an' his goin' to ex-  
pense,  
Doin' somethin' that his father ner his neighbors  
never done;  
But this mild lunatic worked on an' let us have our  
fun.  
Well, of late years it's ben whispered that Kent  
wasn't crazy quite;  
That of churries, pears an' apples he was sellin' of  
a sight.  
An' we met him joggin' homeward summer evenin's  
on the road,  
With a stack of empty baskets after marketin' a  
load.  
Fur he hed a load to market purty nearly ev'ry day,  
An' it wasn't very long before the folks begun to  
say:  
"Cy Kent is a-gittin' wealthy, so he is, now, did  
you hear?  
Why, his income from his orchards is two thousand  
every year."  
"Great Scott!" "Yes, *sir*, let me tell you what  
I heard ol' Sam Black say—  
That Kent could draw his check fur twenty thou-  
sand any day."  
An' that same ol' meddlin' rascal'd used his neigh-  
bors fur a tool

To advertise fur fifteen years that Cy Kent fur a  
fool;  
An' now, sence Cy hes got there with his brains  
an' by his pluck,  
This same ol' Black goes a-tellin' round it's only  
Cy Kent's luck.

---

### OLD JIM.

WHAT! that old black horse in the corner stall,  
knock him in the head, you say?  
No! no! Old Jim's too good a beast to find his  
end that way.  
Ain't wuth his keep? Well, I know that, hain't  
ben fur quite a space,  
But as long's I've got a stable floor, Old Jim shall  
have a place;  
There's Dolly an' Fan an' Dandy, Duke an' Dapple  
an' Bess,  
Good beasts as there is around here, an' a little  
better, I guess,  
Yet with all their glossy beauty, deep flanks an'  
strength of limb,  
They don't come up to what he was, that rack  
o' bones, Old Jim.  
It's twenty years an' over sence I put him to the  
plow:

Let's see, 'twas back in '69; he's five and twenty now.

It wa'n't no trouble to break him, he was so good an' kind,

But at runnin' an' trottin' an' pullin' his like was hard to find.

Too good a horse, folks said he was, to always stay to home,

So when he was six years old, I think, we 'tended fair at Rome.

I entered him in the "forty" class fur farmers' horses there,

An' he won the purse in "thirty-eight," trottin' it fair an' square.

I could 'ave had big money then, the sports all wanted him,

But 'twa'n't no use to talk to me, I wouldn't part with Jim.

Never was sick in his life, was Jim, always ready to work,

Kep' up his end of the whipple-trees, never was known to shirk,

Draw anything that had two ends; he'd try it anyhow

From a cord an' a half of hic'ry wood, down to a subsoil plow.

D'ye think I'd cast him off now, now that he's had his day?

An' stands there old an' feeble, not a tooth to grind  
his hay?  
Not much! Here, Sam, give Jim a mash of that  
ground oats an' rye,  
Bring in a pail o' water and see if the critter's dry.  
When I lift my hand to kill that horse, grown old  
an' almost blind,  
It'll be when I don't know nothin' er when I've lost  
my mind.

---

### THIS 'ERE BROWN.

ON'CT, to a sheriff's sale of farm lands, there come  
down  
From back of Chuckamickmuck mount'in this 'ere  
Brown.  
A gandershankeder feller I hev never seen—  
Ner won't; fur he was humbly-lookin', young an'  
green,  
Tall, awk'ard, bashful, shamblin'—jest a perfec'  
clown,  
                        Was this 'ere Brown.

He'd hed a little money left him—so they said,  
An' was burnin' to invest it, every red,  
In farmin' land; which give the vandue master so  
much joy,

He dum quick knocked down ninety acres to the  
boy,  
Who, fishin' out his wallet, with the cash come  
down,  
    Come this 'ere Brown.

The first spring on there he done nothin' 'cept to  
take

Down all the ole stone walls an' fences, an' to break  
The groun' each side 'em fur some twenty feet er so,  
Rootin' it up with oxen—ev'rything hed to go.  
Weeds, vines, brake-roots an' bushes dassent show  
a crown

    To this 'ere Brown.

Down along the main crick Brown hed a pastur lot  
Laid to bogs an' willers, with here and there a spot  
Where pollywogs an' lizards, mud turkles an' frogs,  
Swum 'round in the water, er sot on rotten logs,  
Peepin', pipin', croakin': "Knee deep" an' "You  
go roun',"

    At this 'ere Brown—

Who showed to them amphibyans a little trick,  
By dreenin' off the stagnant water to the crick;  
Then out he yanked them willers with his big ox  
team,  
An' in he socked his subsoil plow up to the beam,  
An' tore up twenty acres of that jet black groun',  
    Did this 'ere Brown.

Next year he sot out caullyflower an' cabbage there,  
And sowed white onion seed; then, havin' some land  
to spare,

He planted it to celery—cared well fur all—  
An' when he come to harvest it, long in the fall,  
He smiled, ner crossed his sunburnt phiz a single  
frown—

Smiled this 'ere Brown.

As smile he quite well might, fur out of that 'ere lot,  
He hauled two thousand dollars' wuth; that's what  
he got

Fur knowin' somethin'; while us fellers all 'round  
here

Hedn't done nothin' 'tall, 'cept to laff an' jeer  
At the book-an'-rule farmer that we *thought* we'd  
foun'

In this 'ere Brown.

There ain't no use of talkin' 'bout this Brown no  
more.

In land he's got of acres mor'n twenty score.  
He cultivates it all, an' cultivates it well,  
Tho' 'bout how much he's wuth, we can't none of us  
tell.

His house an' buildin's air the best fur miles  
aroun'—

All built by Brown.

He ain't so dum alfired green an' bashful *now*,  
Ner awk'ard neither; he's got over that somehow—

Ben supervisor, an's assemblyman this year.  
Say, now, ain't it funny—things will come out so  
queer?  
Why, he's married to the likeliest gal in town,  
Is this 'ere Brown.

---

## A FELLER THAT I KNOW.

Jes' an ordinary mortal is this feller that I know,  
Neither young ner old, but middlin'-like, that is,  
as ages go.  
Ain't many'd call him han'some, neither is he  
humbly, quite,  
Av'rige nose, eyes, an' complexion, stands up to the  
av'rige hight.  
But he's got a simple habit, not a common habit  
though,  
That sets him off from most of men—this feller  
that I know.

He dresses same as others do, he eats an' sleeps an'  
works;  
I s'pose within his bosom, too, old human natur'  
lurks.  
He has habits ordinary, jes' like ordinary folks.  
He ain't a tee-to-tal-er, an' his friends all know he  
smokes.

But he's got a simple habit, not a common habit  
though,  
That sets him off from most of men—this feller  
that I know.

He's no rabid politician, an' fur church he's ruther  
slack.

He's not eloquent ner learn-ed, an' he hasn't got the  
knack

Of displayin' of his knowledge, er the sperience he's  
got—

He'd git himself all twisted, ef he tried to, like as  
not.

But he's got a simple habit, not a common habit  
though,

That sets him off from most of men—this feller that  
I know.

He ain't no tumblin' acrobat, ner neither can he  
sing,

Ner fight, ner jump, ner rassle, ner do any such  
old thing.

Can't row, ner shoot, ner swim, ner skate, no  
better'n lots o' men.

Now what is his spesh-al-i-ty—his habit? Yes—  
well, then,

His habit is to pay his debts, an' mind his biz-  
ness. O,

I most furgot: He keeps his word—this feller that  
I know.

## WHERE STOOD THE "WHY."

A STRANGER, driving through a country grand,  
Sat in his cart and listened while a farmer of the  
land

Held forth upon the beauty of each vale,  
Hight, plain and sloping hillside, garnishing his  
glowing tale

With lengthy dissertations on the soil,  
Which ev'ry year repaid a hundredfold the farmer's  
toil;

But bitterly complained of how the boys  
Turned citywards and there forgot their rustic lives  
and joys.

"These farms," said he, "are fertile, ev'ry one;  
And warm; see how they're gently tilted toward  
the rising sun.

There's scarce a field but has a living spring,  
So needful for our cattle; and another helpful  
thing—

We dig but thirty feet here to secure  
The best of all well water, tasteless, sparkling, cold  
and pure.

And as to health, we don't die hereabout:  
We just stay in the harness till we slip away worn-  
out.

“ Ah, yes; we’ve many blessings; when one sees  
Our fields of grain and clover, and our rows of  
orchard trees,  
Our houses, modern style, of brick or wood,  
Our well-filled barns and gran’ries, and our stables  
warm and good,  
Our snug-built pigsties, safe from chilling breeze,  
Our sheep pens and our henroosts that are never  
known to freeze—  
One wonders why our lads don’t settle down,  
And stay at home, instead of wand’ring off to live  
in town.”

The stranger raised his head and made reply:  
“ Yours is a beauteous land,” he said, “ none will  
deny  
That wealth and rural thrift doth here abound.  
Excuse me when I ask what is the building that  
I found  
Down here a mile or so, where two roads meet;  
A hovel squat and awkward, weather-beaten, incom-  
plete,  
With loosened shingles, clapboards all awry,  
Unpainted, dirty, broken windows, toppling chim-  
ney high”—

“ The schoolhouse!” the astonished farmer cried.  
“ Know, then, good sir, that since long years ago  
we’ve always tried  
Our hand at thrift. We have hired teachers cheap;

Who've taught and cut their firewood, built the fires and had to sweep.

Of course, some claim the teaching has been lax,  
But this virtue has cheap teachers: they help keep down the tax.

There's those would like to see a palace there;  
With patent seats for scholars and a cushioned teacher's chair.

“ Charts, maps and globes, and all such folderol;  
Floors all of North Car'lin'a pine, slate blackboards on the wall,

A furnace and a ventilator slick,  
New books, to the exclusion of Daboll's arithmetic.\*  
A normal teacher, too, they would bring here,  
To take five hundred dollars from our pockets ev'ry year.

But it won't work; we soon vote down such stuff;  
Where parents got their learning is for children good enough.”

The stranger gathered up his reins and went,  
But first he turned and toward the wondering farmer bent:

“ My friend,” he said, “ my words intend no harm,  
But at the cross-roads stands the ‘ why ’ your sons all leave the farm.”

\* Daboll's arithmetic was introduced into the schools of New York State about 1825; its use was almost universal for a quarter of a century.

## A CONSERVATIVE.

His wife said that Jones was "conservative,"  
And I think he was; at least I will give  
To Jones the benefit of ev'ry doubt,  
And every trick of tongue, to help him out,  
And say when men his memory revile,  
"O! speak not thus of him, it was his style;  
He was conservative."

He tilled his acres with the poorest tools,  
He took no weekly paper; and the schools  
Would all have closed could he but had his way,  
The buildings gone to wreck. "It doesn't pay,"  
He said, "to cram the children's heads with stuff.  
If they can read and write, why, that's enough."  
O, thought conservative!

What tho' to save had always been his bent,  
What tho' he scraped and grasped for ev'ry cent,  
Not always caring for the wrong or right  
So long as gold or silver was in sight,  
What mattered it to him what men might say  
About, or to him—this was e'er his way;  
He was conservative.

He worked his wife to death, indoors and out;  
She was a "mortgage lifter," there's no doubt.  
Then Jones worked on alone, bewailing fate

That had deprived him of a running mate.  
Till finally there came the fatal blow—  
In innovations he b'lieved not, you know,  
Being conservative.

“ The roads must be improved,” somebody said.  
“ The roads,” cried Jones, “ why, sir, you're mad!  
The roads is good enough jest as they air;  
To fix 'em we've got sods an' dirt to spare.  
My father and gran'father drove afore,  
And I, till now, and I can drive 'em more,  
I'm so conservative.

“ Such tax, if laid, would be a perfect steal  
In int'rest of the dude that rides a wheel.  
A benefit! no 'tain't, that's what I say;  
We ain't a-gettin' nothin' fur our hay,  
And jist suppose we could draw bigger loads,  
More hay won't grow because we've got good  
roads;  
It's too conservative.”

In spite of all that Neighbor Jones could do,  
The roads were rounded up, stone-surfaced too;  
The farmers drew their loads of grain that way,  
The roads were lined with “ wheels ” and buggies  
gay.  
Land owners paid their tax, well satisfied.  
And Jones paid his; then went to bed and died—  
An act conservative.

## SAM ROBBINS' AMBITION.

THERE were leaks in Sam Robbins' shingles,  
His fences were tumbling down;  
His cattle *would* break to his neighbor's corn  
While their owner was in town.  
The weeds in this farmer's small garden patch  
Grew lusty and thick and tall;  
He cared for his plow in the furrow, where  
'Twas used the previous fall.

For lack of a plank in his stable floor,  
A colt broke a leg in there,  
While an unused well with the cover off  
Cost the life of a likely mare.  
There were dogs he kept, of a mongrel breed.  
Sheep lived on a nearby hill;  
Some were killed one night; Robbins' dogs did that  
And Samuel paid the bill.

In the kitchen stove Sam's wife burned wood,  
And she always burned it green.  
'Twas a common sight, so his neighbors say,  
For the woman to be seen  
Cutting basswood logs with an old dull axe,  
That she might prepare a meal,  
Or lugging sour milk to the hog-house yard,  
To shut off a hungry squeal.

Now Samuel was a man of sense,  
He was quite far from a fool;  
He could talk on politics by the hour  
And knew how to run the school.  
Yet his obdurate farm never paid him,  
'Twas always too wet or too dry  
On his soil, while his neighbors were working,  
And that was his good reason why

His grass was so spindling and weedy,  
His potatoes hard to find,  
His spring sowing lacking in grain and straw,  
His corn of the "yellow" kind.  
Well, Mis' Robbins died early, "of mortgage,"  
And the sheriff took Sam's land,  
For he'd ever kept his ambition down  
Below what his frame could stand.

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## UNDER THE CHURCH SHED.

MEETING is out, and from the wide church door  
The fathers of the congregation pour;  
Their minds with orthodoxy have been fed,  
They've done their duty; now unto the shed  
Where stand the patient horses sheltered warm  
From autumn's crackling blast, or winter's storm,  
They take their way, a pleasant hour to spend  
In neighborly discussion, friend to friend,

While waiting; for it is a goodly rule  
That wives and children in the Sabbath school  
Should spend a helpful hour; but as for men,  
They've conned those Scripture lessons time again;  
*Their* steps from duty never will be led,  
And—inclination leads them to the shed.

Hands that have often met return a clasp,  
A hearty greeting given with each grasp,  
And though the day is sacred, thoughts will stray  
Into the channels of the working day.  
They stand, they sit in wagons, whittle, smoke,  
And e'en sometimes is heard a week-day joke;  
While chat of markets and of growing crops,  
Of yield of rye or barley, corn or hops  
Is welcome to each man assembled there,  
And each contributes to the chat his share;  
For though they gave the sermon full regard,  
E'en making good resolves when facts hit hard,  
But, while they believed each word the preacher  
said,  
*He* talked in church, whilst *they* are at the shed.

There's talk of weather and of roads to fix,  
There's just a word or two of politics;  
'Tis told when Smith will raise his barn so great—  
A close one mourns about the school-tax rate.  
Men speak of Brown's young horses—how they're  
broke,  
And ask about the sick and aged folk.  
The church needs paint, they figure on the cost,

But pause to learn about a colt that's lost,  
And of Simm's luck—he found a swarm of bees  
While hunting coons among his sugar trees.  
And then—great int'rest—on some fallow ground  
Close by, potatoes grow that weigh a pound;  
While as for threshing, those who have it done  
Say oats are yielding seventeen to one.

The hour speeds by. “ Boom! ” goes the ancient bell;  
There's backing out of horses, and as well  
There is a rustling sound inside the door  
Which opens soon; the Sabbath school is o'er.  
Fair children, sisters, mothers, wives devout  
Are filling up the door and pressing out.  
Dust cloaks are donned, protecting sunshades  
spread,  
Inquiries made and cheery greetings said;  
The string of wagons move, a moment's wait;  
The first receives its load of human freight;  
Each in its turn now drives up to the block  
Toward which the comely dames and damsels flock;  
The minister with smiling face is standing nigh  
To bid each home-bound wagon load good-by.  
Soon all are gone, o'er hills and dales are sped;  
Deserted is the church, the yard, the shed.  
If these have broken Sabbath chatting here,  
Then they are sinning fifty times a year,  
And think no harm. We will let others say.  
If any know, if they abuse the day.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT.

LAST night, while I was resting on that bench by  
the kitchen door,  
A young man riding a wheel went by; and as I  
looked, some more  
Came whizzing down the roadside path, until half  
a dozen went—  
Young men and boys and women, all on wholesome  
pleasure bent.  
And although it is a sight we see each day when  
roads are good,  
Though it's very right and proper—I am thinking  
there is food  
For reflection in the matter. It is one of nature's  
laws  
That causes all must have effects, and each effect  
have cause,  
So, with bicycles as causes—almost half the world's  
a-wheel—  
There's one effect: no hay nor grain is bought for  
steeds of steel.  
Then the horseless wagon's coming; that is certain,  
and our loads  
Will be moved by electricity along our common  
roads.  
That we *may* have electricity in our fields, I will  
allow,  
It *may* sow our grain and reap it; it *may* drive the  
drill and plow,

But it cannot be expected that 'twill cut and haul  
our hay—  
Ah! There won't be much to handle in that scientific  
day,  
For the animals that eat it now on farm and road  
and street,  
Will have passed into a country where the horses  
never eat;  
While the farmer, whom these causes must most  
certainly affect,  
May raise cattle, pigs and poultry, and whatever he  
elect  
To maintain them; but 'tis certain that before this  
mighty change,  
Circumstances new, befitting, and as yet outside the  
range  
Of invention, must come to us; and whatever they  
may be,  
Of cause and consequent effect—we can only wait  
and see.

## AN ASSEMBLYMAN'S PRICE

'WAY back in the early "forties," when railroading  
was young,  
When a mile in eighty seconds was a theme for  
ev'ry tongue,  
When politics meant purity, as all our gran'dads  
say—  
The Senate held a Webster, a Calhoun, a Henry  
Clay—  
Then a farmer from the hillsides got a legislative  
bee  
In his bonnet—not peculiar, for men get 'em, you'll  
agree.

Well, this son of agriculture was elected, and he went  
To the New York State Assembly, where in course  
of time he spent  
An hour in conversation with a stranger from  
"below"—  
Stranger wonderfully clever, stranger sleek as  
strangers go.  
Said the stranger, "Mr. Oatfield, this steam railroad  
is a thing  
Predestined to work great wonders and to hundreds  
riches bring.

" And now, worthy legislator, now, honorable sir,  
If you'd wealth, fine reputation, and great influence  
incur,

Just vote for this concession; it will give my road  
a lift,

And don't forget we've money and positions in our  
gift."

"I'd like," the astute member said, "to boss a train  
of cars—

My clothing all of broadcloth blue, my buttons  
golden stars—"

"There, there," the stranger's soothing voice cut  
short this modest speech;

"Vote right," he said, "the glorious prize is then  
within your reach."

He "voted," and the railroad won. "O thanks,  
great heart and brain,"

They wrote him thus, and yet once more—"Come  
on and take your train."

He went, and from old Albany to saline Syracuse,  
He ran a train of empties and he ruled the whole  
caboose;

There the superintendent met him—he was dusty,  
sleepy, tired—

And took him to the office and informed him he—  
was—"fired."

Now take warning, legislators, do not trust a  
stranger bland

If you'd stay in the procession, and keep marching  
with the band;

Don't be wand'ring into by-ways where you're apt  
to take a slip,  
And be dropped down to your level after having  
made one trip.

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## LET THE OLD DOG IN.

AIN'T old Shep hed his supper yet? Small doubt  
he'd like to come in;  
Shep ain't young as he ust to be; his jacket's wore  
ruther thin.  
I'm dead sure if I was a dog and gettin' 'long kind  
o' old.  
I'd whine myself, if I was left supperless out in  
the cold.  
You *did* give him a plate of bones? Well, what  
did he git from that?  
A plate of well-gnawed-off spareribs, with scarcely  
a scrap of fat  
Don't cut a very great figger towards fillin' a big  
dog up,  
That has seen full fifteen seasons sence he was a  
little pup.  
Now, Jess, bake a dozen pancakes; bake 'em brown  
and keep 'em hot,  
Grease 'em well over with butter, er anything else  
you've got  
That'll make 'em slip down easy. I'll go to the  
barn and bring

A horse blanket er buff'lo skin, er some other such old thing  
Fur him to do his sleepin' on. Yes, here by the kitchen stove!  
I know you girls is quite nippy, and ain't got a tender love  
Fur the "shiverin' old noosance"—shame on you!  
Have you furgot  
When you, Jessie, was a baby and Jane was a little tot,  
And you fell into the goosepond? What chance would you had without  
Old Shep to jump in and ketch you, and fetch you safely out?  
Then, when the Jersey had *me* down, and was rippin' off my clo'es,  
What'd I done if the old dog hadn't took him by the nose,  
And hung on till I recovered, 'n got up onto my feet—  
Well, I had some satisfaction; that bull made good sassage meat.  
Now is them pancakes all ready? Have you got 'em buttered well?  
All right! Jist step out to the door, and while you're there, please tell  
Old Shep that your father says the way's he's used's a sin;  
Then you hold the door wide open while you let the old dog in.

## THE FAMILY'S NEEDS.

UNCLE JOHN is to go to town;  
His team stands at the gate;  
He has two jars of butter in,  
And of fresh eggs a crate.

Some fine fat fowls are stowed away  
In baskets 'neath the seat,  
Well covered with a tablecloth,  
Secure from dust and heat.

Behind is new-cut clover, fresh,  
And a bag with oats—a feed,  
When twelve is struck, each horse will find  
All ready for his need.

Ready to start is Uncle John,  
Ready his gray and brown,  
But he must know before he goes  
What he must fetch from town.

Aunt Sarah comes: "Now, John!" she cries,  
"Here's jugs, get New Orleans,  
And Porto Rique and vinegar.  
Fetch a pot for Boston beans.

"Please don't forget the cans I want—  
A dozen, John, you hear!

Some sugar? Yes, ten pounds of brown;  
The white is most too dear

“ To use for canning; then we need  
Some cloves and ginger root,  
And don’t neglect while you are there  
To call for Johnnie’s boot.

“ Wait, now; the flour is almost out,  
The last we had was good;  
Get more of that, and some rolled oats;  
They’re nice for breakfast food.

“ And, John, please run into a store—  
A dry goods store, I mean—  
And buy eight yards of calico  
To make a dress for Jean.

“ I want a spool of linen thread,  
Some buttons—what is that?  
You can’t keep that whole string of things  
Beneath your old straw hat!

“ I didn’t think you could, dear man;  
They’re here all written down;  
Don’t linger, now, but hasten on,  
Or you’ll be late in town.”

The team has moved a hundred yards.

“ Wait, wait!” Aunt Sarah calls,

“ I ’most forgot a pound of tea  
And cotton darning balls ;

“ And ink and paper for the girls,  
And oil for the machine.

And—John, you’re an impatient man,  
The worst I’ve ever seen ;

“ Well, well, go on, that’s all, I think,  
But paint, some Spanish brown—”  
Her last words fell upon the air,  
For John had gone to town.

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## LOOKING FOR WORK.

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### AN IDYL OF THE TIMES.

“ I’m a mechanic,” the stranger said,  
When he came to the farmer’s door;  
“ I’m a mechanic, out of work,  
And perhaps from your ample store  
You’ll give me a dozen buckwheat cakes  
And a generous slice of pork,  
For surely I’m an honest man,  
In search of any honest work.”

The farmer took the stranger in,  
And from his ample breakfast store

He gave a plate of ham and eggs,  
And buckwheat pancakes full a score;  
He listened while the stranger talked,  
Pitying, when the other spoke  
Of how, within the past eight months,  
He'd labored not a single stroke.

The farmer said, "I've use for you,  
Mechanic poor, and honest man,  
Come, stay with me the season through;  
I'll help you out the best I can,  
Your wage I'll put to highest notch;  
Your skill is worth a lot to me,  
More than an ordinary hand  
In fixing up machinery.

" Of work, I'll give you full six months;  
I'll see that you're kept clean and neat,"  
(He viewed the empty plate and sighed)  
And I'll give you enough to eat.  
We'll mend your clothing, iron your shirts,  
We'll wash and starch your cuffs and collars,  
And every month you work for me,  
Then I will pay you twenty dollars."

The stranger heard with bated breath,  
His lips were curled with finest scorn;  
" Think you!" he thus indignant cried,  
" That I will stop and hoe your corn,  
And milk your cows, and plow your land,

And roast my back in making hay?  
What! I, a good mechanic, work  
My life out for such poorhouse pay!

“ I suppose, too, you’d expect me  
To work from rise to set of sun;  
Why, man, from seven until six  
A good mechanic’s task is done.  
Then, sir, I am a union man;  
Of that one fact I’d have you know.  
We work for dollars three, a day,  
And never work a cent below.

“ I’ve been a master workman now,  
In shop and mill, eight years or more;  
D’ye think I’ll toil for thirty days  
To get of dollars but a score?  
No, sir, your offer I disdain.  
I would not earn a blessed crust  
By stamping sand or kicking hay,  
I’d sooner starve, if starve I must,  
Than bend my back to farmer’s work.  
It’s good enough for such as you  
Who knows no other life than this,  
But as for me, Hayseed, adieu.”

The angry farmer then upraised  
In his gigantic, cruel wrath,  
He chased the good mechanic down  
The neatly gravelled garden path.

He kicked him as he left the gate,  
The poor uncultured farmer elf  
To kick a workingman away,  
Then go and do his work himself.

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## THE FATE OF A LAZY MAN.

I'VE heard a remarkable story;  
I don't assume that it's so,  
But grandmother says it's a true one,  
And grandmother ought to know.

'Twas in the old Mohawk valley,  
About eighteen twenty-two,  
When hard-working people were many  
And lazy people were few,

That there lived a peculiar genius—  
John Smith, 'tis a common name—  
Who was both a drone and a sluggard,  
'Twas said, to his lasting shame.

Not that Smith lacked for bone and muscle,  
He owned a supply of both;  
But his merit—if he had any—  
Was buried deep in his sloth.

At last his industrious neighbors  
Decided that such a shirk  
Had no right to the air of heaven,  
And must die if he would not work.

So they went to where John was sitting,  
Enjoying the pleasant sun,  
And they said in sepulchral voices,  
“Lazy bones, your race is run.

“For you will not consent to labor,  
You will never learn to thrive,  
And we know no special reason  
Why you should be left alive.

“Behold in this wagon a coffin  
Of seasoned Georgia pine;  
Just climb you over the off wheel there  
And into the box recline,

“While we carry you to the graveyard.  
No words! We will have it so.  
You’ve brought it all on yourself, you are  
Too lazy to work, you know.”

John Smith gaped three times, then he answered:  
“My fate, it on you depends;  
Here goes for your pitchy old coffin;  
Don’t spoil a good fun’ral, friends.”

Then he laid himself down contented  
In the box of res'rous wood,  
And they drove quite slow toward the graveyard,  
As a funeral procession should,

Till they met an innocent neighbor,  
Who had not yet heard the news,  
A generous man, and kind hearted,  
Most liberal in his views,

Who halted to make some inquiries;  
“ Whose fun’ral is this? ” he cried;  
“ I surely have heard of no sickness,  
Nor of any one that’s died.”

“ Slothful Smith’s,” said the driver shortly;  
“ Not dead, but he will not work,  
So we’re taking him to the boneyard  
To bury the lazy shirk.”

“ Don’t do that,” the good neighbor pleaded,  
“ Let’s assist this man forlorn;  
Please let him go scot free this time.  
I’ll give him a bushel of corn.”

Smith listened, and peeped from the coffin,  
“ Is it *shelled* corn? ” he inquired.  
“ It is *not?* Well, go on then, driver,  
I am not one to be hired

“ To hurt my soft hands while a-stripping  
    My living from off the cob;  
No, friend, I decline your kind offer.  
    Drive on! Let’s finish the job.”

Did they bury Smith, are you asking?  
I don’t know. The tale ends there;  
I tell it to you as I heard it  
    In detail, with greatest care.

Soon or late lazy folks are buried;  
There are few who are exempt.  
If not beneath the graveyard clods,  
    Then under a mass of contempt.

## INTEREST VERSUS BEER.

Two brothers went forth into life together;  
Each held a farm with a mortgage thereon.  
Early they toiled throughout all sorts of weather;  
Late toiled James Emanuel, late toiled John.  
Both had advantages, one like the other,  
Things that were natural—water and soil,  
Nearness to market, where weekly each brother  
Turned into cash the reward of his toil.

Went John to market—his homecoming early  
Was sure to result as the day wore on.  
Not so with James E.—thick-tongued or quite surly  
His moods when he came after light was gone.  
John kept up his interest, and every season  
His principal dwindled till little was there;  
Emanuel grumbled: “I can’t find the reason  
Why John gets along and has money to spare.”

He questioned his brother: “Now, how do you  
turn it  
To pay on your principal every year,  
While I with hard work have not managed to  
learn it  
In e’en paying interest; isn’t it queer?”  
Said John: “Dear Emanuel, I will relieve me  
Of this treasured secret; no, it is not queer;  
I early discovered, now will you believe me,  
One lager costs one dollar’s interest a year.”

## A PESSIMIST.

I swan, if ever I *did* see  
Such a poor, drouthy spring as we  
Are a-hevin' all 'round here now.  
Corn ground is much too dry to plow,  
Spring grain is jest a standin' still,  
Nothin' growin', an' nothin' will,  
If it keeps on in this here way.  
What makes grass is a cool, wet May;  
'N as far as that part, May makes rye,  
But that can't head when it's so dry.  
Signs of showers! Why, there ain't none.  
Las' Friday night when I see the sun  
A-settin' clear, I says, says I,  
"Friday night, an' a good, clear sky—  
Now, that means rain 'fore Monday night."  
A drop! Not by a blessed sight.  
Can't *now* depend on anything.  
Treetoads c'n croak an' cuckoos sing,  
'N peacocks yawp; but I tell *you*,  
They don't fetch rain ez they ust to do,  
No more'n the swallers flyin' low,  
Doin' their best; can't make it go.  
*I* watch the pitcher; it *may* sweat;  
Ef't does, why, then, we'll git rain yet;  
Ef't don't, of course won't nothin' grow.  
Ef't *does*, remember, *I* told you so.

## MY BOYS.

Ev'ry one o' my boys 's 'n athlete;  
There's Pete;  
Stan' ten bar'l's in a row,  
    Old flour bar'l's, er lime;  
He'll jump in an' out of 'em all  
    'Thout touchin' e'er a chime—  
                Will Pete.

Next one's a mighty rassler, ketch an' throw;  
That's Joe;  
Jest let him git a holt,  
    With his grapevine lock,  
'N the other feller goes down  
    While he stan's like a rock—  
                That Joe.

To ketch, er knock a ball, ther' ain't the like  
Of Ike;  
It's quite a tale to tell,  
    But there *is* people,  
Seen him put a ball clean over  
    Th' Methodist steeple,  
                My Ike.

If it's long, stan'in' jumps yer goin' on,  
Try John.  
Git a board ten foot long;  
    Stan' him up at one end;

He'll jump its length like a hoptoad,  
You kin jest depend,  
Will John.

Fur a downright amatoor acrobat  
There's Matt;  
It's fun to see him swing  
On a circuser's bar,  
An' walk on his han's to the road  
An' back; ever so far,  
That Matt.

The'r athletic monkeyshines gives me joy;  
Ev'ry boy.  
Both me an' the'r mother  
Kind o' like to set an' see  
Them strappin' big young fellus cuttin' up  
The'r didoes after tea,  
Our boys.

## FISHING FOR BULLHEADS.

7 A.M.

" Is the bullheads bitin'? Well, you bet your life  
they bite.

Just you take yer fishpole an' slip down here toward  
night,

An' if you will keep your mouth shut, an' promise  
not to squeal,

I'll show you where I ketched, las' night, twelve  
bullheads an' an eel.

You needn't bring no bait along, that is unless you  
wish;

Las' night it rained 'n I found enough to ketch a  
bushel of fish;

Here they are in a fruit can, blackheads, every  
worm,

Not a dead one among 'em, the bullheads can see  
'em squirm.

You'd better fetch your dopper, the water is deep  
an' still

In the place where I do my fishin', down below the  
mill.

Some fellers don't use no dopper. I almost always  
do;

I like to see it swim around, an' go in under, too.

Yer father'll surely let you come if you hustle  
round an' get  
The chores all done and cows away before the sun  
has set.  
An' then there comes an hour between the daylight  
and the night,  
That we must be down by the crick, for then the  
bullheads bite."

## 7 P.M.

"Here, Jim, set down on this flat stone an' throw  
yer bait ahead;  
Hold on, yer dopper's down too low! Where'd y'  
git that lump o' lead?  
Now I must find a place to set; well, here on this  
old tree,  
Right on the bank; yes, this, I think, is good enough  
for me.

Hi, Jim! yer dopper's tippin'! a bullhead's bitin'  
there;  
Now yank him out. Good boy, old Jim, you've got  
him, I declare;  
Put him right on the stringer here; he'll weigh a  
half a pound.  
Good gracious! where's my dopper? it's under, I'll  
be bound.

Here he comes! ain't he a whopper! he made me  
fairly bounce,

A little bigger'n yours, too; weighs more by full  
an ounce.

Well, if you ain't got another! an' we've only just  
begun.

I tell you if they bite like this, we're in for lots of  
fun.

Now you, now me, now me, now you, O Jim, what's  
this I feel?

It almost jerked me off the log; I b'lieve I've got  
an eel.

Come, Jim, come quick, an' help me pull, for tho'  
I'm purty stout,

There's something on my hook in there, an' I can't  
pull him out.

Now, both together, here we go; the line is good  
an' strong.

Hurrah! he's wrigglin' on the bank, an eel full two  
feet long.

Some more bullheads, an eel or two, it's half-past  
eight or nine;

Let's gather up our traps an' go, an' come some  
other time."

## A GREAT DAY FOR GAME.

Way back in the woodland pasture lot—  
Blackberries plenty there—  
My gran'father, into a tree he got,  
And when one came along, he up and shot  
A great big ugly bear.

Then gran'father loaded up his gun,  
And something happened queer;  
He had just rammed the wad when by there run—  
“Hullo!” cried my ancestor, “here's some fun!”  
A dozen nice, fat deer.

He raised his gun to his shoulder then,  
And took a careful aim—  
“Bang! bang!” how it echoed along through the  
glen;  
I scarce can tell you how loud with my pen.  
O, the ground was strewn with game.

With powder and shot he fed his piece,  
He gazed the landscape o'er,  
And he found that the air was full of geese.  
He shot, and he shot. Did he never cease?  
Yes, when he dropped a score.

And the air grew dark with *such* a mass  
Of pigeons o'er the tree,

And at which he banged, while they fell to grass,  
But his shooting iron grew hot, alas!

So thus it came that he

Quit slaughtering things and scrambled down

To view the work he'd done.

And much to his glory and his renown,  
He gave all his game to his friends in town.

Said he, "I had the fun."

---

### DONKEY AND MONKEY.

"I AM on papa's back," he said,

"And papa is my donkey.

Now trot from the sofa across to the bed;

Crawl under the table; we'll play it's a shed,

And I am papa's monkey.

"What will you have for feed to-day?

Come, now, do not be spunky;

Is it oats, or meal, or a truss of hay?

'A half pound of candy?' is that what you say?

Oh, what a funny donkey.

"Come, sir, back out, for we must go.

Look out! Don't throw your monkey.

Now canter me up to the glass while you show

Me the baby in there; he is there, I know,

I have seen him often, donkey.

“ He’s there right on his papa’s back,  
A baby plump and chunky,  
He is driving, like me, with his reins a-slack,  
And now as I gaze at him, he has a knack  
Of looking like your monkey.

“ Well, papa, go, if go you must,  
And leave your little monkey,  
But you will come back to supper, I trust,  
Then again on the carpet we’ll raise a dust,  
For you will be my donkey.”

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### THE OLD OAKEN SAWBUCK.

No fond recollections surround the old sawbuck,  
The old oaken sawbuck that stood in the yard,  
But woodpile and chip yard bring up sage reflections  
Of when we were youthful, and cord wood was hard.

Did we wish to go fishing, or e’er go a-swimming,  
Or take other exercise seemingly good,  
We were told that good health through our veins  
would go skimming,  
If we took all our exercise sawing the wood.



"NO FOND RECOLLECTIONS SURROUND THE OLD SAWBUCK,  
THE OLD OAKEN SAWBUCK THAT STOOD IN THE YARD."



How we wished for a rest, when the midday once  
over,

We sought out a place 'neath the shadiest tree,  
And heard that the women had chanced to discover  
That fire-wood was needed for baking and tea.

Then we slowly adjourned to the woodpile so hated  
And bent our young backs to the nerve-scraping  
stroke,

Nor could we return till the monster was sated—  
Our noon spell exhausted in service of oak.

When we came home from school in the winter-  
time dreary,

With visions of sleds or of skates on our minds,  
Chained down to the sawbuck until we were weary  
'Twas there, recreation we'd certainly find.

We grew up apace, and the problem of fuel  
Was solved with a buzz-saw by help of horse  
pow'r;

The sawbuck itself, by a process quite cruel,  
Went the way of the wood it had help'd to  
devour.

'Tis years since we saw our old enemy perish,  
We have trod through life's valleys and climbed  
up its hills;

There was nothing about the old sawbuck to cherish,  
But yet, when we think of it, memory thrills

With sighs for our boyhood, now getting quite distant,  
When we bent our young backs to the nerve-scraping stroke,  
And noon-spells and night-spells demands so persistent  
Were made on our muscles in service of oak.

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## PLAYING BEAR.

COME, Baby, the lamps in the kitchen are lit,  
The lambies are gone to their bed;  
The chickens roost high on a sassafras pole,  
The pigs are asleep in the shed;

The lonesome old crow that we saw flying by,  
Sleeps well in the woods in a tree;  
With a hawk and an owl and a flock of snowbirds,  
And a brave little chick-a-dee-dee.

The bright little stars have come out in the sky—  
The wind whistles down the highway.  
How fortunate, we, that we're happy and well,  
And have such a nice place to play!

We'll pull down the curtain and shut out the night,  
And have a great game of "old bear."

I'll be out in the woods, when you come roaring  
forth  
To give me a rousing big scare.

“Boo! Bo-o!” what is that I hear—O, dear me!  
A very strange sound, I declare.  
“Boo! Bo-o!” shall I run?—what's the use—there  
it is—  
It's just what I thought—an old bear!

Go a-way, Mr. Bear; I'm afraid I shall faint.

“Boo! Bo-o!” I don't want to be eat.  
Eat things that you like—honey, berries and such;  
You will find me a tough piece of meat.

Here he comes—I shall run—no, I'll climb up a  
tree!

Here's one, tho' we *call* it a chair;  
I am up; now come on! You may roar all you  
please,  
You've lost your good dinner, old bear!

“Boo! B-o-o! B-o-o!” I don't know, I have heard  
that bears climb;  
If this one should come up my tree,  
He would scare me and bear me and tear off my  
clothes,  
And quickly make mutton of me.

He is climbing! “Boo! B-o-o!” I must scramble  
and run

From the furthermost side of the tree.  
I have done it, and yet, I am nothing ahead—  
He is following after, I see.

No need, he has caught me ; O, please, Mister Bear,  
Don't eat me quite all up to-night.  
You have chased me so long that you've quite tired  
me out,  
And given me—O, what a fright !

Now let me undress you and put you to bed ;  
Then if you'll be quiet and good,  
I'll lie down beside you and tell you a tale  
Of a bear and Miss Red Ridingshood.

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### MY SCHOOLGIRL SWEETHEART.

UP to the old brown schoolhouse that stood on a  
hilltop high,  
Each day we went together, my little love and I.  
She was a winsome lassie, my sweetheart twelve  
years old ;  
Blue were her eyes as heaven, shining her curls of  
gold ;  
Light were her fairy footsteps, pleasant her sunny  
face,  
Carrying youth's prediction of woman's coming  
grace.

Cheery, lovable, modest, how can her charms be told;  
My little schoolgirl sweetheart, my darling twelve years old!

I was her schoolboy lover, sitting across the aisle,  
Braving the teacher's anger for a whisper or a smile.  
Many a red-cheeked apple or pear of golden hue  
Quick passed in the hours of study, noticed by only two;

I drew her sled in winter, and to her tiny feet  
I bound the flashing runners. Then o'er the frozen sheet

We two would glide together, happy 'mid frost and cold,

For, was she not my sweetheart, my darling twelve years old!

Grew there a springtime blossom, soon was the flower hers,

To her came summer glories, and when the chestnut burrs

Opened their lips in autumn, showing their treasures brown,

'Neath the tree sat my sweetheart—I shook the treasure down.

So passed the hours of winter, so sped the summer days;

She has become a woman with gentle, graceful ways,  
I have attained to manhood, yet by our own sweet will,  
I am her own true lover; she is my sweetheart still.

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## A RUSTIC ROMANCE.

'TWAS twenty years ago, and more,  
When I, an awkward fellow,  
Young, tender, easily abashed,  
And just a trifle mellow,  
Came wand'ring down the roadside path  
And, turning, chanced to see  
Squire Johnson's daughter sitting there  
Beneath the apple-tree.

I stole a hurried glance at her;  
She smiled—oh, bliss entrancing!  
My pulses thrilled, my breath came quick,  
My foolish heart was dancing;  
For tho' that path beguiled me oft,  
Until this eve had she  
Not deigned to give her slave a smile  
From 'neath the apple-tree.

Strange it may seem—I chose that walk  
For many eves thereafter;  
Strayed through the gate and sat beside  
The girl whose rippling laughter  
Was music to my lover's ears.  
She pledged her troth to me  
Under the stars in rosy June  
Beneath the apple-tree.

So, twenty years have passed away,  
Bringing us joy and sorrow;  
Ours not the love of yesterday  
But of to-day and 'morrow;  
And when the summer ev'nings fall,  
How natural that we  
Should watch the setting of the sun  
From 'neath the apple-tree.

## MARRYING A PIG FOR HIS PEN.

CHANCING to stroll past a window,  
At the close of a warm summer's day,  
When people were sitting at leisure,  
I heard a sweet, girlish voice say:  
“ Dear me! of what is she thinking!  
Do you know what I always think when  
A girl weds a man for his money?  
She marries a pig for his pen.”

And I thought as I walked slowly onward,  
And pulled at my evening cigar,  
Of the truth her trite saying conveyed me,  
And of how many bright girls there are  
Who unmercifully snub the poor suitors,  
And smile on the wealthy young men,  
To find when the farce is completed,  
They have married a pig for his pen.

“ That girl,” says the world, “ is well married  
That has money and jewels galore,  
Who dresses in sealskin and satin,  
And of servants employs half a score.”  
It may be. The possession of riches  
Should not prove detrimental to love,  
And it may be that matches of all kinds  
Are made in the heaven above;

But I'm not inclined to believe it;  
For the owner of stock, ship or mine,  
Of an English manorial estate,  
Or a barony old, on the Rhine,  
Wins the prize from true worth and real manhood.  
When the wedding is over, 'tis then  
The bride often finds to her sorrow,  
She has married a pig for his pen.

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## TOWARD THE SUNSET.

WHERE are you going, my little lad?  
“Toward the sunset, sir,” he said.  
“I have heard that beyond those purple bounds  
There’s a fairy land, whose beautiful grounds  
Are planted with trees both strange and rare,  
And with blossoming shrubs and flowers fair;  
There are no teachers, nor tasks, nor school,  
It is always springtime, sweet and cool;  
A beautiful lake laps the snowy sand,  
And I journey toward that sunset land.”

And you, tall youth, with manly tread?  
“I, too, toward the sunset go,” he said;  
“For behind those mountains tipped with light,  
There’s a land where ambition’s lofty flight

May find fruition for each desire;  
A land where the soul's most secret fire  
Is sacred; for of all people there,  
The men are wise, the women fair,  
There is wealth and honor on ev'ry hand,  
And I journey toward that sunset land."

Man in your prime, where haste you, pray?  
"Toward the sunset lies my way,  
For far across those hills, so gray and old,  
There lies for me a land of gems and gold,  
Where freighted ship and train bring corn and wine,  
The products of the forest, field and mine  
To fill my coffers. O, ambition high!  
My wealth will, for me, power and station buy.  
To seek these opportunities so grand,  
I journey toward that sunset land."

O whither, grandsire with the hoary head?  
"Toward the sunset, sir," he said;  
"For me, beyond those gates of gold and red,  
There is a land of pure delight with blessings spread;  
I've journeyed long through this life's weary lease,  
And hope, when in that land, to be at peace.  
I'm nearing now that quiet resting place.  
O joy for me, for I shall see His face.  
I pause but for a moment on its strand,  
In journeying toward that sunset land."

## A PHILOSOPHER OF MIDDLE-AGE.

“ I AM fifty to-day,” cried a middle-aged man,

“ I am healthy and sound to the core,

And according to Solomon there should remain

Unto me yet of years a full score.

But statistics have proved, they have proved beyond  
doubt,

That the chances do not favor me,

And I’m doubtful myself, when it comes to the  
pinch,

That the three-score-and-ten mark I’ll see.

“ I have worried a lot since I started this trip,

I have fretted at weather and friends,

I have fought night and day in the struggle for gold,

Felt the joy and the woe that it sends.

Now, take notice, I’ve quit, for it profits me not,

When at best I’ve of years but a score,

To be dealing in jealousies, bickerings, strife,

Not to speak of a dozen things more;

So I’ll just live along—do the best that I can,

Leaving others to plot and connive.

I will hail with rejoicing the sun of each day,

Thanking God that He’s left me alive.”

## A WINTER'S DAWN.

AWAY to west a silv'ry shell is floating high,  
All through the purple dome the stars begin to die,  
Sore stricken by a ruddy light with steady glow,  
Which casts from east long, spectral shadows on  
the snow.

No breeze is stirring; and the score of city spires  
Point heavenward through pearly, floating smoke  
of fires

Lit on a thousand hearths; and seeming loath to die  
Out in the icy vagueness of that frigid sky,  
The misty, earth-born vapors cling to things of  
earth,  
And rest in long, straight lines above their place of  
birth.

Each bush and tree its load of crystal flow'rs to  
bear,  
Stands still and ghostly, doing landscape duty  
where  
The snow-clad fields in long-drawn ridges sweep  
away,  
To meet the distant forest line of purple gray,  
Where, high above the silent graves of blossoms  
there  
A pair of crows, slow winging, cleave the frosty air.

A loaded, early sleigh by frost-hued horses drawn  
Flits groaning, squeaking by, fast driven toward  
the dawn,

From whence a far-off train sends up a husky roar,  
And brilliant rising sun proclaims the day once  
more.

The city's whistles through the clear, resounding  
air

Send forth afar their daily buzzing, blust'ring  
blare.

The workday world's astir; its armor girded on,  
And passed into eternity 's a winter's dawn.

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#### A WINTER'S NIGHT IN THE OLDEN TIME.

OVER the hills the wild wind swept,  
Whirling the drifting snow;  
Over the pen where the sheep were kept,  
Over the place where the chickens slept,  
And fast to the window sills there crept,  
Under the pale moon's glow—

Billows of soft and downy white,  
Hiding the garden ground;  
Putting the rosebushes out of sight,  
Shutting the flowers from cold and light,  
Wrapping the earth in a mantle tight—  
Hollow and hill and mound.

The frost crept up the window-pane,  
Painting a picture rare:  
Masses of flowers and ripened grain,  
Rock, mountain and forest, river, plain,  
A castle, a bridge, a distant train,  
Were quaintly pictured there.

The wind roared down the chimney old,  
Singing a dismal song;  
While round the fire there were stories told  
Of fairies and gnomes and witches bold,  
Cleaving the night in the piercing cold,  
Sped by the wind along.

Little enough we children cared,  
Either for snow or wind;  
All was warm and bright, and well we tared,  
Popcorn and apples and nuts we shared,  
Till 'twas nine o'clock, when we all prepared  
A cozy nest to find.

Then up the stairs our way we'd make,  
Listening to the din  
Of rattling door and shutters' shake,  
Of roaring treetop, of hurling flake;  
Nor did our sleep of fear partake,  
When mother had tucked us in.

## A VOYAGE TO NIDDY-NOD-LAND.

Now a trip for the baby to Niddy-nod-land,  
Where the sea is on rockers, and e'en the smooth  
sand

Is made of white flannel as downy and soft  
As the summery clouds that are floating aloft.  
Hi, ho! for our journey so grand,  
In a billowy cradle to Niddy-nod-land.

We are off; we have started for Niddy-nod-land,  
We are blown o'er the ocean by breezes so bland,  
That they scarce lift a curl from a voyager's head,  
Yet our craft far away on the waters has sped.  
Up, down, with a motion so grand,  
In a billowy cradle for Niddy-nod-land.

O, how long is the journey to Niddy-nod-land?  
Not so long while the zephyrs our white sails ex-  
pand,  
We are nearing it now; we will land on a rock—  
Hush, hush, it's of feathers; we won't feel the  
shock.  
Slow, slow, we have touched the soft strand,  
And our voyage is ended in Niddy-nod-land.

## A DIFFERENCE IN OPINION.

## THE CITY GIRL'S OPINION.

SWEET golden-rod, the loveliest flower of all the summer long,  
Your very life's a poem, or a mute, unuttered song.  
When the rose has lost its beauty, and the violet its blue,  
When all summer flowers have left us, it is then we turn to you,  
With your sun-kissed, lace-like petals, with your leaves of glossy green.  
By the fences and the roadside where your glorious form is seen,  
Not in scanty clusters grow you, but with faces to the sky  
Lift your beauteous golden masses covering vale and mountain high.  
A flower wild and lowly yet with graceful native pride,  
You grace the rich man's table and the corsage of the bride,  
You beautify our fireplace, on our mantel shelf you nod;  
We cannot see too much of you, O gentle golden-rod.

## THE FARMER'S OPINION.

O, golden-rod, you mean exponent of a worn-out  
soil,  
Your hateful ways occasion me a lot of thankless  
toil.  
Let me wander down my fences, let me go where'er  
I will,  
Your ragged, sickly, yellow top is there to plague  
me still.  
A handy shelter, too, you are for noisome worms  
and bugs,  
The only perfume that you yield, a smell of nasty  
drugs.  
I find your dark and bitter leaves in April and in  
May,  
And next I sort your woody stalks from out my  
choicest hay.  
In August and September, you the city folks  
admire;  
I take delight in cutting you and burning you with  
fire.  
If the city people like you, you vile, pernicious weed,  
I hope they'll come and take you, root and branch,  
and flower and seed.

## KNOWLEDGE.

“ I know it *all*,” the young man thought,  
But left the thought unsaid,  
Pondering, meanwhile, mightily,  
That one small human head  
Should hold the knowledge that he’d got;  
“ O, what,” he cried, “ will I  
Not do with this vast brain of mine  
Ere I get old and die.”

“ I know a *lot*,” he thought again,  
When o’er his head a score  
Of years had winged their silent flight,  
“ But there to learn is more.”  
“ I know not much,” this time he *said*,  
In wisdom that age brings.  
“ It takes all things to make a world—  
*All* men to know *all* things.”

## BEAUTY.

BEAUTY, 'tis said, is but a fading flow'r;  
'Tis fleeting, transient, dying in an hour.  
Yet Nature doth with ever lavish hand  
Clothe all her works with form and beauty grand,  
And says to man: "Come, worship at my shrine.  
To give thee joy, doth brain and eye combine;  
For thee I paint the rose and lily fair,  
The woods and fields, the gorgeous sunsets rare;  
For thee roll up the ocean's sparkling waves,  
For thee the land, the stalagmited caves;  
For thee I color butterfly and bee,  
Tint the wild blossoms, decorate each tree;  
And when, perchance, a woman's lovely face  
Receives my tend'rest care, her form my grace,  
Scoff not, nor seek to look beyond the vail,  
Nor do thou Nature's glorious plans assail;  
Suffice it that thou see'st the beauty there;  
It pleaseth thee; thou hast no time to spare  
To seek perfection—let this beauty shine  
Tho' it be transient; it has source divine.  
All things cannot obey man's beck or nod,  
Enjoy the hour—this beauty's born of God."

## THE OTHER LIFE.

OUR lives are full of mystery; we are not  
The creatures of a day, to be forgot  
When death has rolled the earthly mists away  
And has released the spirit from its clay.

Who has not felt, and chased the thought in vain,  
A fleeting phantasy flash o'er the brain,  
As if on some far-distant, shad'wy shore  
These thoughts were thought, these acts performed  
before.

Somewhere we've lived before we saw this earth,  
Somewhere been fitted for a later birth.  
And here we're fitting for a higher plane  
Of use and beauty. We shall live again.



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